S
388.1
T6eadr
1994

Environmental
assessment, F 6-
1(24)109, Dixon-
Ravalli, 7.3 miles
in Sanders County
and Lake County

PLEASE RETURN

Environmental Assessment
for

F 6-1(24)109
Dixon - Ravalli
Sanders & Lake Counties, Montana

(Control #0579)

STATE DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

SEP - 7 1994

MONTANA STATE LIBRARY
1515 E. 6th AVE.
HELENA, MONTANA 59620

Submitted Pursuant to
42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)

and

Section 2-3-104, 75-1-201, M.C.A.

by the

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration, Region 8

and the

State of Montana
Department of Transportation
Highways Division – Engineering

APRIL 1994

1996

MONTANA STATE LIBRARY
S 388.1 T6eadr 1994 c.1
Environmental assessment, F 6-1(24)109,
3 0864 00089332 4

PLEASE RETURN

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

F 6-1(24)109

DIXON - RAVALLI

7.3 MILES
IN

SANDERS COUNTY
AND
LAKE COUNTY

STATE DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

SEP - 7 1994

MONTANA STATE LIBRARY
1515 E. 6th AVE.
HELENA, MONTANA 59620

This document is prepared in conformance with MEPA requirements and contains the information required for an Environmental Assessment under the provisions of ARM 18.2.237(2) and 18.2.239. It is also prepared in conformance with NEPA requirements for an Environmental Assessment under 23 CFR 771.119.

Submitted pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)
by the

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
and
Montana Department of Transportation

Submitted by: Gordon J. Stockstad Date: 4/5/94
Montana Department of Transportation
Environmental and Hazardous Waste Bureau

Reviewed and Approved for Distribution: DC Lewis Date: 4-7-94
for Federal Highway Administration
Division Administrator

The Following persons may be contacted for additional information concerning this document:

Gordon J. Stockstad, Acting Chief
Environmental & Hazardous Waste Bureau
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
Helena, MT 59620-9726

Hank Honeywell, Division Administrator
Region 8, Montana Division
Federal Highway Administration
301 South Park, Drawer #10056
Helena, MT 59626-00562

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012 with funding from
Montana State Library

http://archive.org/details/environmental10924unit

TABLE OF CONTENTS
FOR DIXON - RAVALLI
F 6-1(24)109
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

PAGE

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT front
TABLE OF CONTENTS i
I.PURPOSE AND NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION............1
    A.DESCRIPTION.............................1
    PROJECT LOCATION MAP......................1a
    B.EXISTING CONDITIONS.....................1
    C.NEED....................................2
    D.ISSUES..................................3
II.ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED.......................3
    A.NO BUILD................................4
    B.WITH GRADE SEPARATION...................4
    DRAWING OF ALTERNATE BRIDGE ALIGNMENTS.......4a
    C.AT-GRADE CROSSING.......................5

III.ENVIRONMENT AND EFFECTS......................6
    A.SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC.....................6
    B.LAND USE................................7
    C.FLOODPLAIN..............................7
    D.IRRIGATION..............................7
    E.WATER QUALITY...........................8
    F.AIR QUALITY.............................9
    G.HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL............9
    H.WETLANDS................................10
    I.WILDLIFE................................11
    J.RECREATION..............................12
    K.RARE PLANTS.............................12
    L.NOISE...................................13
    M.CONSTRUCTION............................13
    N.IRREVERSIBLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES.....14
    O.HAZARDOUS WASTE.........................14
    P.SEEDING.................................15

IV. COMMENTS AND COORDINATION.....................15
    SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT.............15
    LIST OF PREPARERS.........................16
    LIST OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES...............16

APPENDIX A BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES REPORT AND WETLAND FINDING

APPENDIX B HAZARDOUS WASTE POTENTIAL

APPENDIX C PROJECT CORRESPONDENCE

APPENDIX D DISTRIBUTION LIST

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
DIXON - RAVALLI
F 6-1(24)109
C# 0579

This Environmental Assessment has been chosen as the appropriate level of documentation to determine whether the potential impacts of this project are significant. If the impacts are found to be significant, then it will be necessary for an EIS to be prepared.

I. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION

A. Description

This proposed project is located on Montana 200 in both Sanders County and Lake County. The project will begin at the west edge of Dixon (milepost 108.7) and extends easterly 7.5 miles through the Flathead Indian Reservation to end at the junction with U.S. 93 (milepost 116.2) near Ravalli.

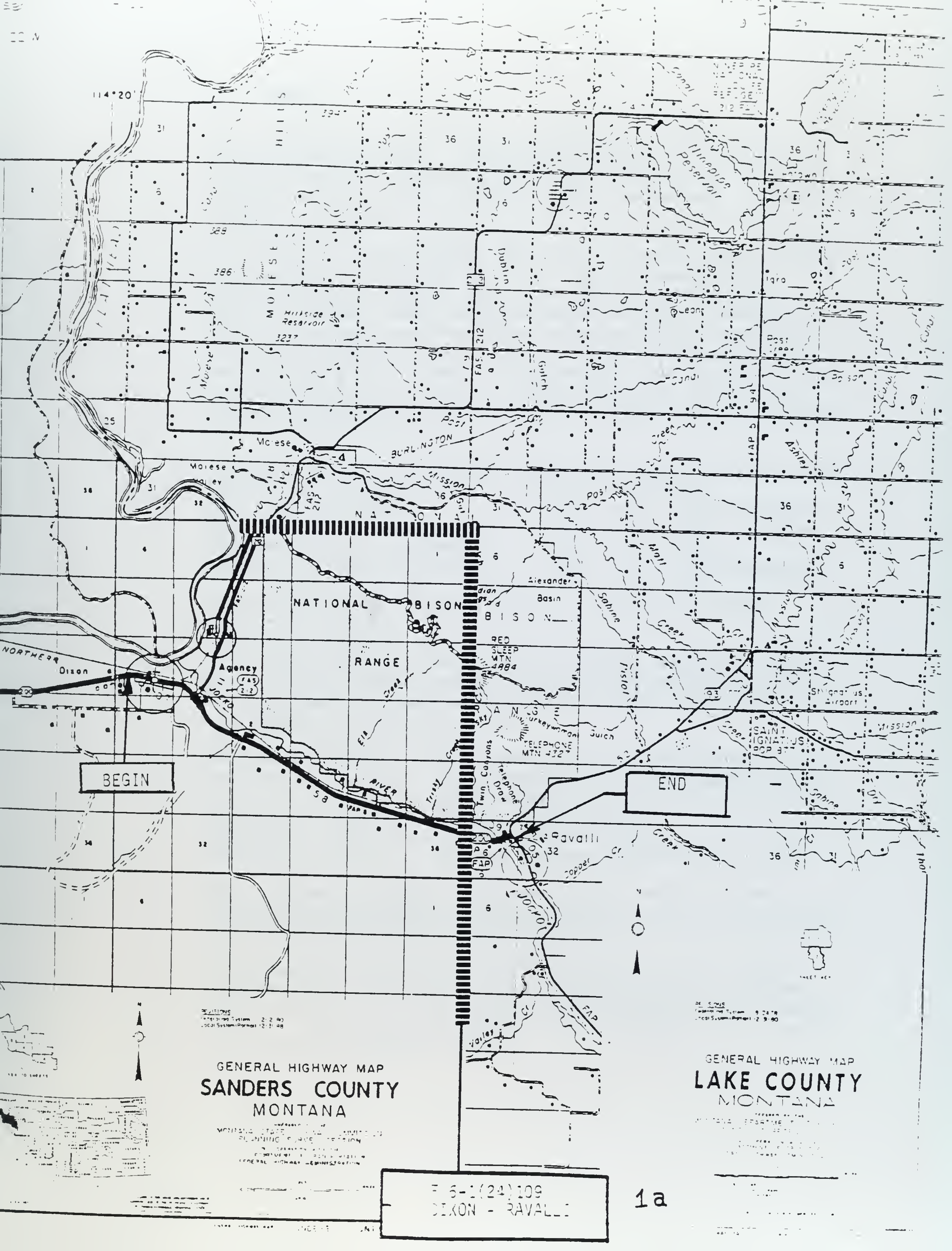
The scope of work will consist of reconstructing the road to a 40 foot subgrade with 28 feet finished top and will include grading, drainage, plant mix surfacing and fencing. In Dixon, an urban section will include curb and gutter, sidewalks, waterline relocation and provisions for storm drainage. The project will consist of reconstruction with seal and cover. Approaches will be rebuilt to standards. Mailbox turnouts will be provided as practical.

Two alternatives are being considered as possible railroad crossings. One is a new structure to replace the existing overpass at the east end of the project and crossing the Jocko River. The other is for an at-grade railroad crossing. These are discussed in section II - Alternatives Considered.

The project will require the purchase of about 89 acres of additional right of way.

B. Existing Conditions

The existing highway corridor runs through gently rolling terrain. The existing roadway within the project limits was built in 1927 and 1934 with improvements in 1934 and 1952. Presently it has a 22-foot paved width. The fill slopes are 4:1 and steeper. The maximum existing vertical grade is 5%. All vertical curves meet 55 mph design standards.


114°20'
NATIONAL BISON RANGE
RED SLEEP MTN 4884
TELEPHONE MTN 4327
Alexander Basin
Hillside Reservoir
Moiese
Moiese Valley
Dixon
Agency
JOCKO
RIVER
Ravalli
SAINT IGNATIUS
St. Ignatius Airport
Mission
Post
Ashley
Sabine
BURLINGTON NORTHERN
BEGIN
END
F 6-1(24)109
DIXON - RAVALLI
GENERAL HIGHWAY MAP
SANDERS COUNTY
MONTANA
GENERAL HIGHWAY MAP
LAKE COUNTY
MONTANA

C. Need

The need for this project is demonstrated by the accident statistics. Accident and severity rates are higher than the statewide average. With the construction of this project, an improvement in traffic safety is likely.

A review of the accident data for a twelve-year period indicates an accident rate of 2.54 accidents per million vehicle miles for this section of roadway. This is higher than the statewide primary average of 1.60. The accident severity rate is 1.63 compared to a state average of 1.54. The accident history for the period January 1, 1980 to September 1991 is as follows: there were a total of 119 accidents, including 51 injury accidents with 82 injuries and 5 fatal accidents with 5 fatalities.

Certain types of accidents occurred more often than the statewide average for that type of accident:

Off road accidents	61%	vs.	42% statewide
Dark and unlit conditions	57%	vs.	37% statewide
Single vehicle accidents	80%	vs.	N/A
Vehicle-animal collisions	15%	vs.	10% statewide

The majority of animal related accidents involved domestic animals.

Accident clusters are locations where accidents have occurred far more frequently than the average location on a project. There were five accident clusters identified on this project:

MP 108.4 - 108.8	No safety project recommendations
MP 110.1 - 111.0	Recommendations eliminated because of pending reconstruction project
MP 112.5 - 113.0	No recommendations
MP 114.4 - 114.9	No recommendations
MP 115.8 - 116.1	Safety project completed in 1984

The accident cluster locations which have not been corrected by separate safety projects will be corrected or improved as part of this project.

A comparison of roadway maintenance costs for this section of road with a similar nearby section showed that the cost of maintenance was substantially greater (54%). The reconstruction of this highway will result in lower maintenance costs.

Traffic data is as follows:

1993 ADT = 1300 (Present Average Daily Traffic)
1995 ADT = 1350 (Letting Date)
2015 ADT = 1800 (Design Year)
DHV = 225 (Design Hourly Volumes)
T = 13.9% (Trucks - Commercial)
All Trucks = 34%

D. Issues

At an informal public meeting held near Dixon in August of 1991, two major issues were brought up:

1) What impacts will the new highway have on wildlife habitat?
2) Concern about the safety of an at-grade railroad crossing. The group felt that this type of crossing would be unsafe and that the additional cost of a bridge is justified.

These issues are addressed in this document under Sections II and III.

Other issues expressed include:

- Right-of-way width is excessive.
- An EIS should be prepared for this project.
- Erosion and slides at station 185 should be restudied.
- Not enough public meetings have been held to keep residents informed of project plans.
- Speed zones through Dixon may be too high. (discussion under social and economic impacts)
- Questions about approaches, stockpasses, and other specific R/W issues.

II. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Since the existing highway corridor is a long established route effectively serving the local residents as well as tourist traffic, it's felt that there are no location alternatives that would have any advantage over the existing highway corridor for this project.

A preferred alternative has not yet been selected. Alternatives B and C will require new right-of-way, about 89 acres each. A map showing the locations of the proposed crossing alternatives is attached. (See figure 4a)

A. No Build Alternative

One alternative considered for this project was the "no build" or "do nothing" alternative which would leave the roadway in its present condition. This would result in no activities beyond the continued routine maintenance of the existing facility. This alternative wasn't pursued since this wouldn't provide a facility capable of handling the existing or projected traffic volumes, reduce high maintenance costs nor enhance safety for this stretch of roadway.

Effects

This alternative would result in minimal effects to the environment. Not widening the road or flattening slopes would allow the roadside to remain as it exists. Maintenance costs and traffic accidents would remain high.

B. With Grade Separation Structure

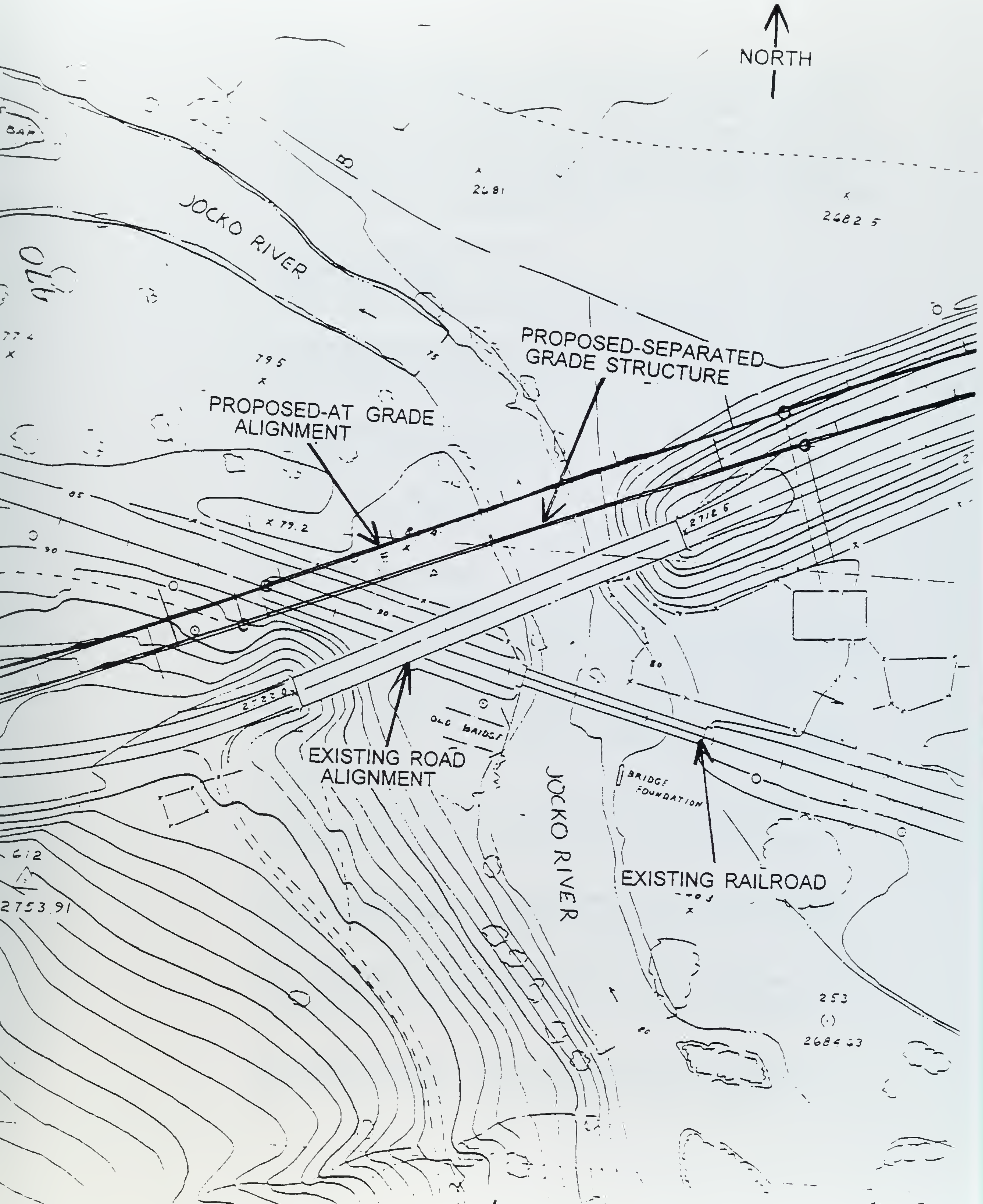
Under this alternative a grade separation structure (overpass) would be reconstructed to cross both the railroad and the river at the east end of the project and the existing structure would be removed. The remainder of the project would follow the existing highway corridor.

Effects

This alternative uses an overpass to cross both the railroad and the river. Under this alternative a new structure would replace the existing one. The effects of replacing the existing overpass would be the continuation of safety and convenience for drivers.

The construction of a new bridge over the Jocko River would involve some temporary construction-related impacts such as sediment.

New right-of-way would be purchased to accommodate the wider fill slopes resulting from the somewhat higher new structure.


NORTH
JOCKO RIVER
PROPOSED-SEPARATED GRADE STRUCTURE
PROPOSED-AT GRADE ALIGNMENT
EXISTING ROAD ALIGNMENT
OLD BRIDGE
BRIDGE FOUNDATION
JOCKO RIVER
EXISTING RAILROAD
2682.5
79.5
79.2
2712.6
2753.91
253
2684.63

Cumulative impacts are not likely to occur due to the continuation of the existing level of safety, and access to property. Future highway projects along this route include four other reconstruction projects, two overlay, two bridge replacements and one rest area. The design width of this project and future projects along this route is consistent with the Route Segment Plan.

Future Highway Projects:
2 overlay jobs
Idaho Line East MP 0 to MP 10
Noxon East and West MP 10 to MP 29

2 bridge replacement jobs
E. Thompson Falls MP 53
Lynch Creek NW of Plains MP 74

4 reconstruction jobs
Thompson River - E. MP 56
Weeksville - W. MP 62
Paradise - E. MP 83
Dixon - West MP 91

C. At-Grade Crossing

Under this alternative the railroad crossing near the east end of the project would intersect at the same elevation. The crossing would be signed and signaled. The remainder of the project would follow the existing highway corridor. The existing crossing structure would be removed and replaced with a structure crossing the river only.

Effects
School buses and trucks transporting hazardous waste are required to stop at this type of crossing, which increases the risk of rear end collisions.

The possibility of a derailment from a potential collision between a large truck and train could result in contamination of the river.

The exposure to any additional risk would be greater for local users due to their frequent crossings.

The bridge, which would cross only the river, would be shorter. This would place the ends of the bridge closer to the river which could

restrict passage of animals such as deer that have been moving along the river beneath the longer overpass. The design techniques that would minimize wildlife impacts include modifying the bridge end slope to include a path for use by wildlife. This design technique was a modification to this alternative in response to environmental concerns.

III. ENVIRONMENT AND EFFECTS

The project basically involves the upgrading and widening of a deteriorated existing facility to meet current and anticipated travel needs. The relationship between the local short-term uses of man's environment and maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity has been considered as noted below. There will be some short-term uses of the environment during construction of the project, however, we expect them to be insignificant.

A. Social and Economic

The major effect of this project is the improvement of the highway facility. Access to public services and facilities will be improved.

The area surrounding the highway is the Flathead Indian Reservation. The land is populated with numerous farms, ranches and residences served by the highway.

The proposed project would effect 75 parcels that would require a purchase of all or a portion of the parcels. The proposed project will not result in the displacement of any land owners.

The existing highway facility would provide inadequate service of future needs.

Some of the local citizens feel that the speed zone through the town of Dixon is too high. The speed limit would not be changed as a part of this project. After construction is completed, a speed zone study could be requested by the county, the highway commission, or law enforcement. The study could result in either a decrease or an increase in the speed limit.

Americans With Disabilities Act - In the urban section of Dixon, wheelchair ramps/"curb cuts" are

being installed for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (**42 U.S.C.A. 12101**).

B. Land Use

Current land use within the project limits is for farming and ranching. Highway and railroad rights-of-way are some of the most prominent and important uses of the land.

No change in land use is expected.
The project will require the need to purchase about 89 acres of additional right of way.

It is estimated that approximately 17 acres will be converted from farmland to highway right-of-way. Part VI of Form AD-1006 was completed in accordance with the Farmland Protection Policy Act. The total site assessment score was 151. The USDA recommends that any site receiving a total of less than 160 points be given a minimal level of consideration and no alternate locations need be evaluated.

C. Floodplain

The project parallels the Jocko River and Flathead River floodplains. Neither alternative (the at-grade crossing or grade separation structure) would encroach below the 100 year flood elevation of either floodplain with the exception of the Jocko River crossing at the east end of the project. Impacts to the Jocko River floodplain will be minimal if a new overpass is built. An approved Floodplain Development Permit will be required from Lake County for the new bridge crossing over the Jocko River at station 473+19.

D. Irrigation

An irrigation ditch which crosses the road will need to be relocated. The crossing is at station 139+50 and flows near the road back from station 133 after turning and flowing from under the railroad track. The ditch flows from the north under the railroad track toward the highway near station 133 then runs eastward alongside the road to station 139+50 where it crosses to the south side.

MDT's Hydraulics Section will coordinate irrigation modifications with the Flathead Irrigation Project.

E. Water Quality

At station 185, the slope between the road and the Jocko River is approximately 1:1. The slope is fairly well covered with vegetation. The stability of the slope has been investigated and found to be stable. No evidence of sliding could be seen. At the bottom of the slope, a 10 foot high nearly vertical bank resulted from erosion. The slope at station 185 will be protected from erosion to prevent the flow of water down the slope surface. Erosion control measures along the new roadway cut section at this location are planned to alleviate any work or placement of material into the Jocko River channel.

Permits Required - The following permits will be acquired prior to any relevant disturbance:

An Aquatic Lands Conservation Ordinance Permit will be required for work within the Flathead Indian Reservation.

This proposed project will be in compliance with both the *Montana Water Quality Act* for *Section 3(a)* authorizations, and the *Montana Stream Preservation Act* (**MCA 87-5-501** through **509**, inclusive):

A ***124SPA*** *Stream Protection Act* Permit will be required by the MDFW&P; and

A *Clean Water Act* (**33 U.S.C. 1251 - 1376**) - *Section 404* permit from the U.S. Army - Corps of Engineers. The COE will determine if this proposed project qualifies for a "Nationwide" or an "Individual 404 permit under the provisions of **33 CFR 330**.

All work will also be in accordance with *Section 319* of the *Water Quality Act* of 1987 (**P.L. 100-4**). A Notice of Intent (NOI) for Storm Water Discharges under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit (**P.L. 92-500**) will be required with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The possibility exists that sediment could enter the Jocko River at it's crossing due to short-term construction related impacts. To minimize the amount of sediment entering the river, an erosion control plan will be prepared for this proposed project. The objective is to minimize erosion of disturbed areas during and after construction. Best Management Practices will be used to design an Erosion Control Plan using guidelines described in MDT's Highway Construction Standard Erosion Control Workplan.

Several minor drainage courses will be intercepted by the road. These will be handled with culverts.

Storm drainage will be required for the town of Dixon. The outfall point for the storm drainage will be north of station 119+14 where a pothole (a low point hydraulically connected to the river at low flow) will provide adequate retention of the small amount of water collected by the storm system.

F. Air Quality

Air quality impacts after construction will consist mainly of exhaust emissions from motor vehicles, which will increase regardless of the new construction. The improved traffic flow provided by this project is likely to offset the potential increase in exhaust emissions which would therefore have a long-term beneficial effect on air quality.

This proposed project is located in an "unclassifiable/attainment" area of Montana for air quality under 40 CFR 81.327, as amended. As such, this proposed project is not covered in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Final Rule of November 24, 1993 on air quality conformity. Therefore, this proposed project complies with Section 176(c) of the *Clean Air Act* as amended (**42 U.S.C. 7521(a)**).

Based on previous air monitoring information gathered by tribal resource studies, air quality levels in this area didn't exceed the standards and were well within the attainment criteria.

G. Historical and Archaeological

This project doesn't affect any historical or archaeological sites.

Sixteen properties were located during the cultural resources survey. Only three appear to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places; Jeannot's Store (24SA277), the "Kady" Homesite (24LA102), and the Johnson Barn (24LA103).

Since the roadway will be shifted away from the "Kady" Homesite, there will be no effect to that property.

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation concurred with SHPO and MDT's recommendation of a finding of no adverse effect for Jeannot's Store and the Johnson barn. The alignment of the road will be shifted away from the Johnson barn and will not effect Jeannot's store.

The bridge that would be replaced as part of this project is not eligible for listing on NRHP since it does not meet the criteria.

Unmarked graves may exist at two locations along the project. One of the sites, which is known to be beneath a culvert, will not be disturbed. The culvert will be abandoned in place and a new culvert will be installed nearby. The exact location of the other site is not known other than it is somewhere between stations 135 and 140 on the south side of the road. Should it be uncovered during construction, the contractor will be required to comply with special provisions written into the contract. These special provisions were developed in consultation with the Flathead Cultural Committee.

H. Wetlands

There will be 14.28 acres of wetland and 6.25 acres of riparian land effected by this project. Mitigation will occur off-site within the Reservation boundaries.

There are 10 wetland and 18 riparian areas adjacent to the project. Most wetlands are narrow borrow ditches that resulted from previous road construction.

It was determined that there was no practicable alternative to the proposed construction in the above wetland-type areas and the proposed construction includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands, in compliance with the Interagency Memorandum of Understanding.

As mitigation for the 14.28 acres of unavoidable wetland impacts, new wetland areas will be constructed off-site since opportunities are restricted on site. The mitigation plan will be within the Flathead Indian Reservation boundaries and will be determined by the Technical Subcommittee of the Montana Interagency Wetland Group. A Wetland Finding was prepared and documents the steps to preserve wetlands of this project. The Finding can be found in Appendix A.

I. Wildlife

The Jocko river corridor supports a diverse population of animals. The animals move about the area though it is not a major migratory area.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service was contacted regarding the presence of Threatened and Endangered species. They concurred with a determination that the proposed project was "not likely to adversely effect". A Biological Resources Report is included in Appendix A of this document.

The only bald eagle nest within the project vicinity is north of the west end of the project. Borrow sources or batch plants will not be located within a 1/2 mile radius of the nest. The highway passes through the outer edge of a 1.5 mile zone from the beginning of the project to the junction with FAS 212. The project will not effect the nest since it is well outside of the 1/2 mile radius where air disturbances (noise, fumes) can effect the eagles.

Fish
The Jocko River is located entirely within the Flathead Indian Reservation. According to the Tribal Stream Classification the stream has a one rating (highest value fishery resource). Game fish species found within the Jocko include rainbow trout, brown trout, westslope cutthroat, bull trout, and mountain whitefish. The

possibility of sediment entering the river exists at the bridge crossings. The design already contains plans to minimize this.

The bull trout has a potential for being listed as a threatened species in Montana.

Bison
The National Bison Range, which is located on the north side of the railroad and across the river, will not be effected by the reconstruction of the highway. The alignment of the road will be shifted 20-30 feet toward the Bison Range between stations 240+00 and 450+00 (approximately 21,000 feet). Since the Bison range is about 175 feet away from the road even at its closest point, there will be no effect.

Bat Habitat
Townsend's big-eared bat (*Plecotus townsendii*) is known to inhabit the area. The bridge is a roosting site and "holes" used for their maternity sites are found in the hills north of the bridge. The bat is not a threatened or endangered species but is considered to be sensitive by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management but not by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Mitigation will consist of installing culverts under the bridge to be used by the bats as habitat.

J. Recreation

Undeveloped pullouts occur along the highway and are used for parking by fishermen and floaters. The approach to the bison range, which also provides parking for fishermen, will be perpetuated. All other existing private approaches will also be perpetuated.

Along much of the project, the railroad separates the highway and the Jocko River. There are only two locations where the road is very near the river. One of those places is at station 185 where the bank is high, steep and eroded along the lower bank. Consequently, access to the river is somewhat limited. The other location is near station 210 and will be remain accessible. With a wider roadway and flatter fill slopes there will be more opportunities for informal fishing/floater access along the length of the proposed project than currently exists.

K. Rare Plants

No rare or sensitive plant species were identified during a database search of the project vicinity.

L. Noise

A traffic noise assessment was completed in February 1992 for this project. Traffic noise levels calculated for 1990 and the Design Year (2015) using existing and projected traffic volumes indicate that noise levels won't increase substantially over existing levels.

The Leq(h) calculations indicate that Design Year noise levels will not increase substantially (less than 10 dBA) over existing levels; nor will Design Year noise levels exceed the FHPM 7-7-3 Noise Abatement Criteria of 67 dBA for Category B (schools, residences, churches, public meeting facilities) at potentially sensitive receivers. Overall, traffic noise level increases will be insignificant with the construction of this project.

Distances from Centerline	Present Year	Design
75′	62	63
150′	57	59
300′	53	54
	%T = 15.5	%T = 15.5

M. Construction

A temporary increase in air pollution due to dust and fumes is expected as a result of construction operations. The contractor will be required to adhere to all federal, state and local regulations to minimize this pollution. Air quality permits will be obtained from the State Air Quality Bureau for asphalt plants and crushers. Dust will be controlled by watering or other acceptable methods.

There will be an increase in noise levels during the actual construction process. This will be

temporary and should occur only for the duration of construction activities.

Since the new roadway will follow the existing alignment, it will be necessary to maintain traffic on the highway during the construction period. This will disrupt the area and cause some traffic delay; however, this will be short lived and last only as long as it takes to complete the necessary work. A traffic control plan will be developed to minimize inconvenience to motorists during construction.

N. Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

No resources other than money, labor and road building materials will be irretrievably committed to this project.

O. Hazardous Waste

There are two sites associated with this project. See Appendix B for vicinity map of sites.

Site-1 Dixon Machine Shop. (McTucker Garage) Located north of the PTW and "across from 1st street and west of East Street". This site was a service station with above-ground tanks and piping present. For the past 20 years the building has been used as a welding shop. The site had no evidence of surface contamination from overfilling. Testing was conducted. A full assessment of this area within the right-of-way could not be done due to the presence of sidewalks and buildings. If the structures were to be removed, further investigations would be completed. However, the building and concrete in front will not need to be removed since the reconstructed highway with curb and gutter and 4.5 feet wide sidewalk can fit within available space. If a hazardous waste site is uncovered during construction, then a contingency plan will be followed as suggested by the AASHTO Task Force on Hazardous Wastes in their "Hazardous Waste Guideline for Project Development."

Site-2 Dixon Country Store. This site is an operating store south of the PTW between 2nd and 3rd Streets. The pumps are within the existing right-of-way but outside of the construction area.

The right-of-way is 35 feet from centerline on each side of the highway through Dixon. The pumps are installed on the sidewalk in front of the store approximately 28 feet from the centerline. However, the reconstruction of the highway will extend only to the edge of the sidewalk (approximately 22.5 feet).

There are no EPA superfund sites along the project.

P. Seeding

In accordance with **M.C.A. 7-22-2152**, and **60-2-208**, MDT will re-establish a permanent desirable vegetation community along all areas disturbed by the proposed construction. A set of revegetation guidelines will be developed by MDT that must be followed by the contractor. These specifications will include instructions on seeding methods, seeding dates, types and amounts of mulch and fertilizer, along with seed mix components. Seed mixes include a variety of species to assure that areas disturbed by construction are immediately stabilized by vegetative cover. The Seeding Special Provisions developed for this proposed project will be forwarded to the responsible County Weed Board for approval.

IV. COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

An informal public hearing was held in August of 1991 to scope the issues of this project. The issues that were a result of that meeting are listed on page 2.

A Location and Design Public Hearing will be held on the project to solicit comments from the public. Comments will also be collected during the availability period of the EA. If appropriate, following receipt of comments, the Montana Department of Transportation will prepare a separate document recommending a "Finding of No Significant Impact" (FONSI) for the project. This will incorporate this Environmental Assessment and any

other appropriate environmental information. However, should the impacts be found to be significant, then an EIS would be required.

LIST OF PREPARERS

Gordon Stockstad	MDT Environmental and Hazardous Waste Bureau, Acting Chief
Dale Paulson	Federal Highway Administration, Region #8 Environmental Coordinator

LIST OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The following agencies have jurisdictional or project review authority over the proposed project.

Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Montana Natural Heritage Program

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Flathead Resource Organization

State Historic Preservation Office

U. S. Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers

APPENDIX A

WETLANDS FINDING
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES REPORT

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Biological Resources Report

DIXON RAVALLI
F6-1(24)109
C# 0579

Prepared By:
Jeff Ryan
MDT Environmental Specialist
September 3, 1993

SUMMARY 1

INTRODUCTION 2

PROJECT AND GENERAL AREA DESCRIPTION 2

STUDY METHODS 3
- Agency Consultation and Literature Review
- Field Survey

STUDY RESULTS 3
- Terrestrial Resources
    - General Description
    - Rare & Sensitive Species
    - Impacts
    - Mitigation/Coordination Measures

- Aquatic Resources
    - General Description
    - Rare & Sensitive Species
    - Impacts
    - Mitigation/Coordination Measures

- Biological Assessment - Threatened and Endangered Species 9
    - Wildlife
        - Bald Eagle/Peregrine Falcon
            - Analysis
            - Cumulative Effect
            - Coordination/Mitigation Measures
            - Determination of Effect
        - Grizzly Bear/Gray Wolf
            - Analysis
            - Determination of Effect
    - Conclusions: Threatened and Endangered Species

WETLANDS.......... 11

Site Inventory and Description.......... 11
    Sites 1, 2, 4, and 5
    Sites 7, 9, and 10
    Sites 3, 6, and 8

Wetlands Impacts and Mitigation.......... 12

REFERENCES

ATTACHMENTS

    Erosion Control Workplan
    Project Translite

SUMMARY

This proposed project is located on Montana 200 in both Sanders County and Lake County. The project begins at the west edge of Dixon and extends easterly 12 kilometers (7.5 miles) through the Flathead Indian Reservation to the junction of U.S. 93 near Ravalli.

The scope of work will consist of reconstructing the road to a 12.2 meter (40 foot) subgrade with 8.5 meter (28 feet) finished top and will include grading, drainage, plant mix surfacing, seal and cover and fencing. In Dixon, an urban section will include curb and gutter, sidewalks, waterline relocation and provisions for storm drainage.

Two alternatives are being considered as possible railroad crossings. One is a new bridge structure over the Jocko River similar to the existing MRL railroad overpass at the east end of the project. The other alternative involves an at-grade railroad crossing and river crossing.

The majority of the project alignment traverses the Jocko River Valley. The surrounding area of the project is characterized by foothill/mountainous terrain consisting of open meadow areas and ponderosa/douglas fir forests. The immediate project vicinity consists of dry and irrigated cropland interspersed by riparian and wetland areas.

No significant impacts to the area terrestrial and aquatic resources are expected due to ample displacement habitat in the area and a considerable spatial separation of the majority of the project from the Jocko River.

Based on an adequate distance buffer between the project and active bald eagle nests, insignificant habitat loss, and a lack of major recent usage by the peregrine falcon, grizzly bear and gray wolf, a "not likely to adversely affect" determination for the bald eagle and peregrine falcon is appropriate as is a "no effect" determination for the grizzly bear and gray wolf.

The project would affect approximately 8 hectares (20 acres) of wetland/riparian habitat. While an opportunity to partially mitigate these impacts exists on site, the majority of the mitigation will likely occur elsewhere in the Flathead Indian Reservation.

INTRODUCTION

The proposed reconstruction/road widening and bridge replacement project will be primarily funded by the Federal Highway Administration. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that all federal actions and expenditures be evaluated for their impacts on the environment, including biological resources. Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) also requires federal actions and expenditures to be examined for their impacts on plants or animals that are listed or proposed for listing as threatened or endangered species. Other federal statutes and orders that protect biological resources and may specify impact analyses include the Bald Eagle Protection Act, the Clean Water Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands). The proposed project is also a state action within the Flathead Indian Reservation, so the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) must also satisfy all appropriate tribal environmental rules and regulations.

PROJECT AND GENERAL AREA DESCRIPTION

This proposed project is located on Montana 200 in both Sanders County and Lake County. The project begins at the west edge of Dixon and extends easterly 12 kilometers (7.5 miles) through the Flathead Indian Reservation to the junction of U.S. 93 near Ravalli. (See Figure 1)

The scope of work will consist of reconstructing the road to a 12.2 meter (40 foot) subgrade with 8.5 meter (28 feet) finished top and will include grading, drainage, plant mix surfacing, seal and cover and fencing. In Dixon, an urban section will include curb and gutter, sidewalks, waterline relocation and provisions for storm drainage. The project will consist of reconstruction with seal and cover.

Two alternatives are being considered as possible railroad crossings. One is a new bridge structure over the Jocko River similar to the existing MRL railroad overpass at the east end of the project. The other alternative involves an at-grade railroad crossing and river crossing.

The majority of the project alignment traverses the Jocko River Valley. The surrounding area to the south of the project is characterized by foothill/ mountainous terrain consisting of open meadow areas and ponderosa/douglas fir forests. A majority of the northerly side of the project is also semi-mountainous terrain with less forested areas due to the drier southerly aspect. Most of this area is occupied by the National Bison Range. The immediate project vicinity consists of dry and irrigated cropland interspersed by riparian and wetland areas. The majority of these areas have formed in the ditch and the natural depressional areas between the existing road and the railroad grade which parallels most of the project alignment.

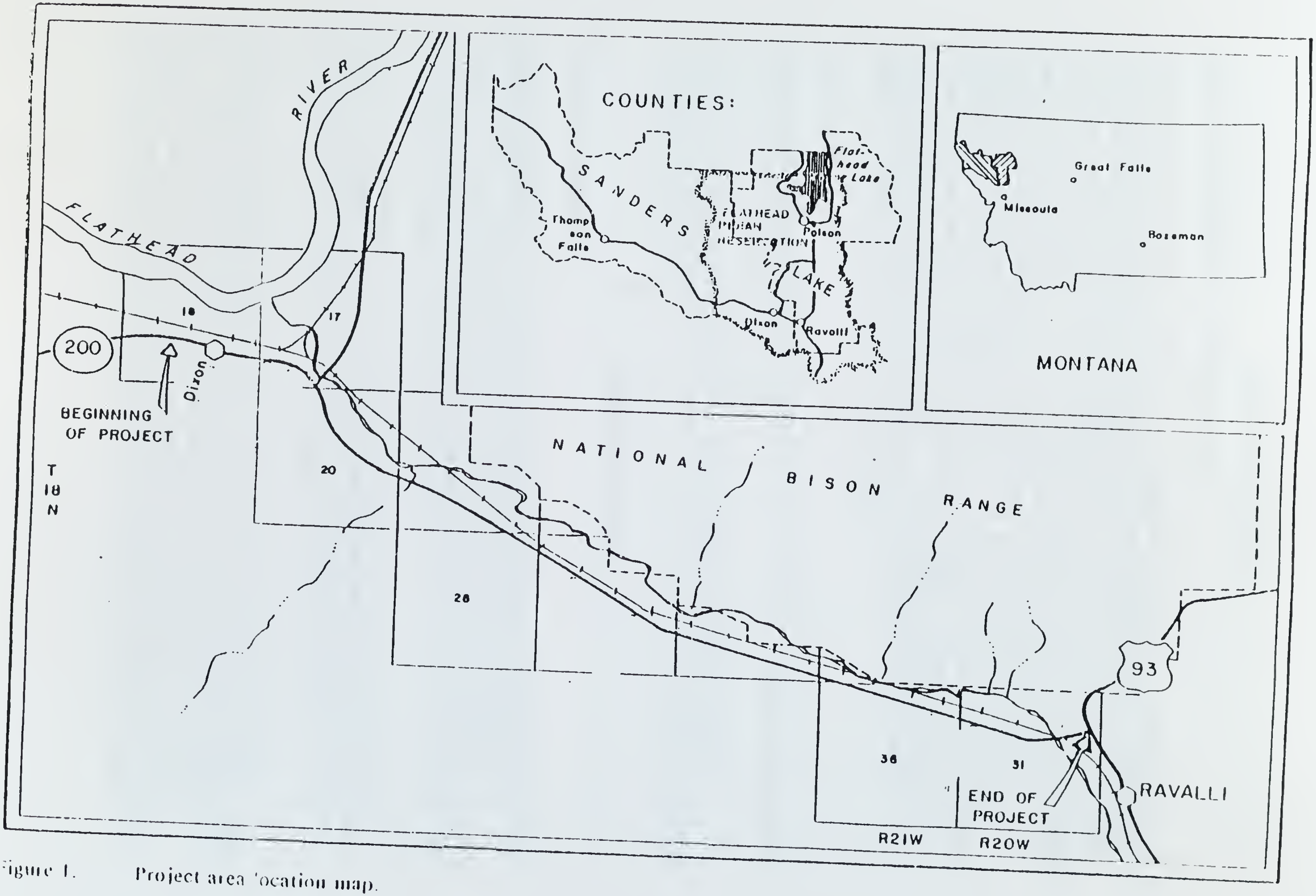


Figure 1. Project area location map.

STUDY METHODS

Agency Consultation and Literature Review

Requests for information pertaining to endangered, threatened, and sensitive plant and animal species were sent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS) and to the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP). Information requests were also made to the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP). Numerous conversations with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS) biologists familiar with the project area were conducted (Lockart, Bangs, Malcolm) and numerous conversations and field reviews were held with members of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribe (CS & KT) biological staff personnel (Ball, Becker, Moriteau, Gillan, Jackson). In addition to these agency contacts an on site field review was conducted with Richard Eggert, spokesperson for the Flathead Resource Organization (FRO). Pertinent literature was reviewed and considerable effort directed toward analysis of numerous FRO and public wildlife/environmental concerns with the project.

Field Survey

Several reconnaissance-level field surveys were conducted on entire project right-of-way (8/16/90, 11/25/91, 5/13/92).

During the course of these surveys all of the project was either walked or reviewed by car. During these surveys the wetland and riparian project resources were also inventoried.

STUDY RESULTS

Terrestrial Resources

General Description. The majority of the subject alignment traverses the Jocko River Valley. As with most western Montana river systems this riparian community is characterized by stands of cottonwood, aspen, chokecherry, and red osier dogwood, with an understory composed primarily of rose, hawthorn, currant, and various wheatgrass and bluegrass species.

Most of the immediate project right-of-way and area proposed for acquisition consists of irrigated and non-irrigated farmlands interspersed with the previously noted riparian areas and numerous wetter areas composed primarily of willow, cattail, and various sedge and juncus species (see Wetlands Section).

Wildlife species inhabiting the project area are typical of the diverse animal populations inhabiting similar western Montana river and semi-mountainous areas. The major species potentially occurring in the area are, mule and whitetail deer, elk, moose, black bear, mountain lion, bobcat, lynx, beaver, and otter. Bald eagles are becoming more common as seasonal and nesting users of the valley. Various waterfowl, grouse, and song bird species are very common in the project area. Both grizzly bears and wolves have been reported in the project area.

Rare and Sensitive Species. Data search of the project area with the natural heritage program revealed no sensitive plant species. However, the Townsend's big eared bat (Plecotus townsendii) is a resident of the project area.

On January 3, 1992, I contacted Dave Worthington, a graduate student of Professor Carrie Foresman, who had recently completed research work concerning Plecotus near our proposed Jocko River bridge site. Dave indicated there are a number of abandoned mine adits approximately 200 meters north of the bridge site. Dave and Professor Foresman have entered the adits and documented the use of them as maternity sites for approximately 30-70 Plecotus bats. Plecotus is recognized as a "sensitive" species by the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, but not by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, although it is a candidate for federal threatened and endangered species listing. In any event, Plecotus is rare in Montana and has experienced substantial population declines in the remainder of the United States recently. These declines are primarily attributed to loss of maternity roost sites. Dave indicated our project should not impact the adit maternity roost sites. He had also visited the Jocko River bridge site and observed evidence of bat usage (guano) in cavities in both bridge ends. Dave indicated the evidence was not recent and not necessarily attributable to Plecotus since other bat species could have left the evidence. He did not observe any Plecotus using the bridge cavities during his early spring reconnaissance of the bridge cavities. If he had, this may have indicated a maternity roost site since pregnant bats "winter" at the maternity sites and as a result should be found at the sites before the late spring/summer warming period when they have their young (pups) and eventually leave the site with the pups. Based on Dave's observation of the bridge end cavities, he did not anticipate any significant impacts to the bats utilizing the bridge - Plecotus or other bat species. Dave then suggested, since he was leaving the state, to contact Nicole Evans if we had any other questions concerning the site. Nicole had assisted Dave with some of his on-site research activities.

On March 4, 1992, I contacted Nicole Evans and discussed the Plecotus issue with her. Nicole said she had accompanied Dave Worthington during his spring reconnaissance of the bridge end cavities two years ago. She confirmed the bat guano evidence and that no bats were observed using the cavities. She did mention considerable evidence of human-related use of the cavities, such as trash and other debris and noted this disturbance is not at all conducive to bat roosting. She suggested I contact Professor Foresman and discuss the Plecotus issue with him.

On March 5, 1992, I contacted Professor Carrie Foresman. Professor Foresman confirmed the adits near our project are definitely maternity sites. He concurs with Dave Worthington on this issue and that our project will not impact the bats in the adits. Professor Foresman has not visited the bridge site, but indicates that since Worthington never saw Plecotus in the bridge cavities during his early spring visits, this would indicate they had not "wintered" in the bridge and therefore it is not a maternity site. The lack of climate temperature stability in the bridge cavities also indicates this. The evidence of bat usage (guano) Worthington did note at the bridge does indicate a potential roosting site.

If the site is a roosting area Professor Foresman indicated it would be preferable to schedule bridge construction to commence in late September and conclude it by July. If this was not possible because of contract letting dates or winter construction problems, the bats would either temporarily use the adits or find a new roosting site.

In addition to Professor Foresman, I also contacted Dave Genter, Natural Heritage Foundation, on February 29, 1992. Dave Genter was quite helpful providing basic physical and behavioral characteristic information for Plecotus. He also suggested he would submit a proposal to us to provide a monitoring effort at the site.

Impacts. The Flathead Resource Organization (FRO) correspondence (Eggert/Vinson 2/10/92) suggested a number of potential "impact" issues.

The FRO letter contends that "There is a constantly-used corridor across highway 200 on the west lip of Gabe Hill that cuts along the agency golf course outside the bison range fence and proceeds north along the fence adjacent to Highway 212".

On February 9, 1992, I again contacted Dale Becker, CS & KT Tribal Biologist, and asked him his opinion on the FRO animal migratory contention at Gabe Hill and other possible migratory routes in the area. Dale indicated they don't have any information to substantiate this or refute it. Dale did indicate there are numerous whitetail deer and some mule deer in the project corridor. A herd of 20-25 elk frequent the higher timber slopes directly south of the project corridor. Dale suggested I contact Jon Malcolm, the USFWS National Bison Range Manager, and ask him about the animal migratory issue.

On March 9, 1992, I contacted Jon Malcolm about this issue and also about the following FRO contention:

> "There is a constant ebb and flow of animals from the Valley Creek side (south) to the bison range fence. Rather than a barrier, the bison range may be an attraction to the lower Jocko and Valley Creek populations. We know that there are low spots in the fence where elk and deer jump, and we can assume there is a valuable genetic recruitment aspect to the exchange during the winter. Elk are especially likely to cross the highway to drink from the Jocko. During cold spells, the J-Canal is either dry or frozen, and there are no springs on the Valley Creek divide."

Jon's opinion on the Gabe Hill and other animal migratory issues was that he didn't think it was very likely. He has driven the area often for numerous years and he has seen nothing to indicate major animal movements. He also agrees that if there ever were other major migratory routes the Bison Range fence would have eliminated them. During the last ten years, Jon is only aware of two instances which occurred, two to three years ago, of elk jumping the Bison Range fence. Also, he feels that only "infrequent" or "occasional" movement of animals to the Bison Range fence is a more appropriate statement than characterizing it as "constant ebb and flow". Jon added that the "genetic recruitment aspects" of the very few documented instances of outside elk entering the bison range is not an issue. The Bison Range manages their own genetic pool and brings in new

animals as necessary to maintain genetic diversity. Jon's only other comments pertained to the road crossing of elk to drink from the Jocko River. Again, based on his personal observations, this does not appear to happen often and would be less likely during winters with good snow cover.

The previously referenced FRO letter suggests the project area includes "several important wildlife migration areas across the highway" and additionally notes animals such as elk, black bear, deer, beaver, wolves, and possibly grizzly bears use these migration areas. There is no question these animals might be sighted in the vicinity of the project, but the suggestion of "important migration areas across the highway" is not appropriate. Historically, animal migration across the project corridor probably occurred. Since the construction of the large fence around the Bison Range, any historic migratory patterns would have been severely limited or completely eliminated.

The last animal migratory impact issue to consider involves restricting animal movement along the river corridor. The only potential for affecting this by the proposed project would be at the Jocko River bridge crossing. While on-site physical evidence such as trampled vegetation or obvious trails doesn't support the assumption of a major animal movement under the existing bridge, the visual screening and overall width of the above grade-over the railroad structure probably does promote use by the resident animal populations which move along the river corridor. The at grade bridge alternative would not eliminate this movement, but could result in higher animal mortality from vehicle collisions - especially with deer.

On March 4, 1992, I contacted Charles Moriteau, CS & KT Tribal Warden, to ask his opinion on the FRO suggestion that "we have not considered roadside cover removal" and that "elk and deer are hunted year-round on the Reservations by tribal members. Animals which must cross the highway will be considerably more vulnerable if these cover areas are set back".

Charlie does not think this is an issue. In the 15 years he has been a Tribal Game Warden, he is only aware of three deer which were killed in the last seven to eight years by tribal members in the vicinity of the road and that these animals were taken in open fields where they were feeding. In general, shooting from or along the road in this area by tribal members is virtually nil. Charlie agreed with our contention that "opening" up the corridor by removing brushy growth will improve sight distance and should provide for fewer car/animal collisions. He also indicated that the railroad removes much of the brush throughout the corridor via their yearly burning program.

Conversations with Rick Rulwiler, former Highway Maintenance Supervisor for the project area (10/24/91 Ryan/Fulwiler) indicates a historic deer-car collision rate of over 10 incidents per year. Also, numerous small mammals are killed each year within the project area. Removal of this vegetation fringe will greatly improve sight distances and should lower animal mortality in the corridor.

In general I would agree with Charlie and Rick's analysis of the situation. While the contention that increasing vehicle speed through improved road construction increases animal mortality rates on some projects may be appropriate considering

the narrowness/closeness of the existing roadside vegetation on this project, the widening/removal of this vegetation should have a positive impact on the resident animal populations.

Approximately 36 hectares (90 acres) of additional right of way will be purchased and the majority impacted through filling or clearing of existing vegetation. The majority of the acreage will involve farm and pasture land with approximately 8 hectares (21 acres) of potential wetland/riparian impacts. The 8 hectares (21 acres) of loss represent approximately two percent of about 1000 acres of similar habitat available in the vicinity of our project. This is ample habitat to absorb the displacement of animals effected by our project.

Mitigation/Coordination Measures. Our current wetland mitigation plans call for a majority of "off-site" wetland mitigation and conversations with Sue Ball, CS & KT Tribal Biologist, (October 2, 1991) indicates the riparian mitigation associated with our project should primarily involve correction of riparian/stream problems at a number of sites within the Reservation. Considering the expressed problems on the Jocko River by FRO I would recommend a majority of this mitigation effort be directed to the Jocko River in the immediate vicinity of our project. If successful, the mitigation repairs to the river system could, through increased river stability, provide for new riparian area growth that should far exceed projected riparian losses associated with our project.

On May 13, 1992, Sue Ball and I met with Richard Eggert, FRO representative, to discuss and field review these potential wetland/riparian mitigation sites near the subject project. Also attending the meeting were CS & KT Tribal Fisheries and Hydrological personnel and a reporter from the "Missoulian".

Two sites were reviewed on the Jocko River. One site, involving National Bison Range property, near the Jocko River Fishing Access site (approximately midway on the subject property) would involve re-establishment of an historic overflow channel that had been blocked by an Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) project about 30 years ago.

The other site is about two miles west of the Jocko River access site and is on tribal property. This mitigation project would involve redirecting most of the river flow back into the historic main channel of the river which was also blocked by previous ASCS projects.

I recommend we pursue both previously noted mitigation projects as either a separate project or in conjunction with the proposed highway construction project.

As noted in the previous impact section, Dave Genter, MNHP, submitted a proposal to initiate a bat monitoring project at the project Jocko River bridge site. This proposal was acceptable to MDOT and was just completed. A final report has not been submitted yet, but initial results indicate the existing bridge is not a maternity site for the Townsend's big eared bat. Other less sensitive bat species are common at the site. Again, pending final report submittal, the incorporation of some sort of protected cavities in the new bridge abutment structures should be considered to mitigate for potential bat disturbances at the site.

Conversations with Sue Ball and stated concerns by FRO about maintaining or improving wildlife movement along the Jocko River at the project bridge site indicate we should consider a bridge design to accomplish this. The above grade-over the railroad bridge alternative would be preferable in this regard with an additional 5-10 meter width to provide for animal movement under the bridge.

Aquatic Resources

General Description. The surrounding riparian habitat associated with the Jocko River in the project vicinity has already been described. The Jocko is entirely within the Flathead Indian Reservation and parallels the majority of the proposed highway project from the bridge replacement site at the east end of the project to its confluence with the Flathead River near the west end of the project. The Jocko is characterized by a gravel and cobble substrate combined with very good water quality condition. These attributes combined with a diverse fishery consisting of rainbow trout, brown trout, west slope cutthroat, bull trout, brook trout, and mountain whitefish have all contributed to the CS & KT highest value fishery resource rating.

Rare and Sensitive Species. The west slope cutthroat and bull trout are sensitive fish species which have recently been proposed for listing as a threatened and endangered species. If listed, these species will be afforded full protection under the threatened and endangered species act.

Impacts. Considering the diverse fishery, including the two sensitive species previously noted, and the excellent water quality in the Jocko River, potential sediment entry impacts to the river from the project is definitely an issue. Fortunately, no major drainages or tributary streams will be traversed by the project that could easily transport sediment into the river. The majority of the project is separated from the river by the railroad grade that parallels the project and a riparian area approximately 150-300 meters (500-1000 feet) wide.

However, there are two areas, other than the bridge crossing site, where the present alignment is near the river. The possibility of sediment entry into the river at these points was noted in the 5/30/91 FRO letter. During conversations with Lloyd Jackson, CS & KT Shoreline Protection Manager (9/5/91 Ryan/Jackson), he indicated a similar concern. At approximately Station 180 and 210, the existing roadway does come within 20 meters (60 feet) of the Jocko River. Sediment and other maintenance materials such as sand or salt from current road maintenance activities can enter the river at these points. Lloyd also was concerned about water quality contamination if a vehicle carrying hazardous material ever overturned at these locations.

The proposed bridge crossing alternatives both present the possibility of short term sediment entry into the river during the construction phase. While neither alternative should significantly effect the river if standard construction/erosion control measures are used, the above grade-over the railroad alternative will have less effect because construction disturbances will be further from the river banks.

Mitigation/Coordination Measures. The present design does incorporate an alignment shift away from the river in the vicinity of stations 180 and 210. Ditch blocks and rock drainage chutes are also included. However, in addition to these features the following design options could be considered to lessen the potential for sediment and/or chemical contaminants from entering the river in these areas: 1) Isolate intermittent cross drainages from the roadside drainages; 2) Place shallow retention basins at culvert inlets; and 3) Use roughened/serrated cut slopes in conjunction with progressive permanent seeding as cut slopes are exposed.

Use of standard construction and temporary erosion control techniques at the bridge site should effectively mitigate the potential short duration sediment entry into the river during the construction phase. Also, note the attached erosion control forms that have been completed for the previously noted potential sediment effect areas.

BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Threatened and Endangered Species

Threatened and endangered species include those species listed or proposed for listing by the USFWS as threatened or endangered. Under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, as amended, activities conducted, sponsored, or funded by federal agencies must be reviewed for their effects on species federally listed or proposed for listing as threatened or endangered.

No plant species in Montana are federally listed as threatened or endangered. The aquatic plant species, water howellia (Howellia aquatilis), is proposed for listing; however, the proposed project doesn't fall within the expected or known range of this species.

Bald Eagle/Peregrine Falcon

Analysis. Bald eagles and peregrine falcons may occur in the project area as spring and fall migrants and the bald eagle may occur as a winter resident (Wood 1991). No bald eagle nests are known to occur within 2.4 kilometers (1.5 miles) of the proposed project (Becker pers.comms.) No peregrine falcon nesting or foraging areas are known to exist in or near the project area. However, several active bald eagle nests occur to the west of the proposed project and eventual nesting use of the river corridor near the project is a possibility. Given the concentration of bald eagles in the area, foraging use near the project area is likely. Ample displacement areas are available within the river corridor to compensate for foraging disturbances. Due to the likely cessation of construction activities during the winter no significant impacts to wintering bald eagles are anticipated.

Cumulative Effect. Other road maintenance activities and eventual highway upgrades will occur in subsequent years. Some timber sales and recreational activities can also be expected to continue in the area. No significant cumulative effects from these activities are expected.

Coordination/Mitigation Measures. Potential adverse impacts from the proposed highway construction activities will be avoided with the adoption of the following measures:

1. No associated activities such as crusher, plant mix, staging areas and borrow/gravel sites will be allowed within a 0.8 kilometer (0.5 mile) radius of active bald eagle nest sites.
2. Continue contact with tribal biologists to determine if new nest sites are established prior to project construction.
3. Associated activities between a 0.8 kilometer (0.5 mile) and 4.0 kilometer (2.5 mile) radius of nest sites will require review by a MDT or CS & KT Biologist.

Determination of Effect. A "not likely to adversely affect" determination for the bald eagle and peregrine falcon is based on the following:

1. Ample displacement foraging and nesting habitat is available for the potential short duration disturbances.
2. Associated construction activities such as crusher, plant mix, staging areas or borrow actions will not be allowed near active nest sites that would detrimentally affect nesting activity.
3. Active bald eagle nests are not near enough to the project to be disturbed.
4. Wintering bald eagles will not be disturbed.

Grizzly Bear/Gray Wolf

Analysis. Although the USF&WS did not indicate a need for an analysis of these species (Wood 1991), due to concern expressed by FRO (LeDeau 1991, Eggert 1992) an analysis was conducted.

Conversations with Dale Becker, CS & KT Tribal Biologist (10/24/91 & 9/5/91 Ryan/Becker) indicated he is not aware of any confirmed grizzly bear sightings in the project vicinity. The area is not a grizzly bear usage area and is not within a grizzly bear management situation. I confirmed this with Larry Lockart, USF&WS (10/25/91 Ryan/Lockart).

Wolves have been reported in the project area. Discussions with Ed Bangs, USF&WS Wolf Coordinator (10/25/91 Ryan/Bangs) indicate a few wolf pups were recently trapped and removed from the project area because of cattle predation complaints. The pups had entered the project area from their normal location in the vicinity of "Nine Mile Divide" which is north of Alberton. USF&WS wasn't able to trap all the pups and return them to the Nine Mile Divide area, so some wolves may still be in the vicinity of the project area. The project area is not within a wolf recovery area and even if it was a reconstruction project of this nature should not significantly affect wolves.

Determination of Effect. Based on the preceding information, it is determined the proposed action will "not affect" the grizzly bear or gray wolf.

Conclusions: Threatened and Endangered Species

It is the determination of this report that the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect the bald eagle and peregrine falcon and have no effect on the grizzly bear and gray wolf. The USF&WS concurred with this determination February 12, 1992 (Harms 1992).

WETLANDS

On 8/15/90 the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and Confederated Salish and Kootenai (CS & KT) biologists surveyed the area for wetlands and wildlife resources. Wetlands were inventoried using the Cooperative Wetlands Evaluation procedure developed by the Montana Interagency Wetland Group. This Wetland Evaluation procedure is acceptable to CS & KT Tribal Environmental Compliance personnel. For specific site location information please refer to the "Wetland Finding" in the project file.

Site Inventory and Description

There are 10 wetland sites and 18 riparian sites that are expected to be impacted by the proposed construction. Wetland function and values and site characteristics are summarized on the wetland field forms. Sites that have similar characteristics were grouped together on the field forms, and their function and value rankings summarized.

The vegetative composition of the 18 riparian sites identified on this project are very similar to the Aspen-Cottonwood dominated wetland sites 7, 9, and 10.

Sites 1, 2, 4, and 5

These wetland sites consist primarily of willow and chokecherry trees that occupy the roadside borrow areas. The majority of them are growing in thicket configurations and connected together by lower density growth. Most of these wetlands are saturated or inundated for the majority of the year, and there is evidence of use by wildlife. Approximately 60% of the wetlands associated with this project are of this type.

Sites 7, 9, and 10

These sites consist of roadside borrow areas that have large cottonwood and aspen trees occupying them. They are saturated or inundated for the majority of the year, and there are large amounts of organic build-up present. Wildlife values are typically high because of the cover that is offered. At the edges of these sites there are cattails that border the tree line. Approximately 30% of the wetlands associated with this project are of this type.

Sites 3, 6, and 8

These sites are comprised of borrow areas and low flats that parallel the roadway and are permanently inundated or saturated. Vegetation consists of bulrush, sedge, and poa species, with some timothy and brome in a peripheral band around them. Wildlife values are typically low for these particular areas, but they add to the diversity of habitat within the project area, and contribute to the food chain. Approximately 10% of the wetlands associated with this project are of this type.

Wetlands Impacts and Mitigation

Total wetland area impacted by construction activities involve 14.28 acres. The wetlands associated with this project are primarily borrow areas created by the existing roadway. Irrigation run-off and high ground water are the primary water sources for the wetlands. Riparian areas impacted by construction activities involve 6.25 acres.

Alignment shifts to avoid these wetlands and riparian areas would be neither cost effective nor practicable considering they parallel the roadway on both sides of the project for a majority of its length. Design exception to "narrow" the project is not considered practicable because of increased safety considerations due to a reduced clear zone. Some of the adjacent landowners have expressed an interest in providing on-site mitigation opportunities. These opportunities will be pursued, but due to the anticipated magnitude of the impacts and topographic and hydric restrictions on site, most of the mitigation will occur elsewhere within the Flathead Indian Reservation. The final mitigation plan and site location will be determined by the CS & KT Natural Resources Department, in cooperation with the Technical Subcommittee of the Montana Interagency Wetland Group. The CS & KT Tribal Biologist is a member of the Technical Subcommittee. Final mitigation should equal or exceed the function and values of the impacted wetlands and riparian areas.

REFERENCES

Ball, S. CS & KT Biologist, Pablo, MT. Pers. Com. of October 2, 1991 and meeting of May 13, 1992 and August 15, 1990, with Jeff Ryan, Montana Dept. of Trans., Helena, MT

Bangs, E. USFWS, Helena, MT. Pers. Com. of October 25, 1991 with Jeff Ryan, Montana Dept. of Trans., Helena, MT

Becker, D. CS & KT Wildlife Manager, Pablo, MT. Pers. Com. of October 24, 1991, September 5, 1991, February 9, 1992 with Jeff Ryan, Montana Dept. of Trans., Helena, MT

Beer, M. Montana Natural Heritage Program. Helena, MT. Letter of March 7, 1991 to E.L. Vinson, Montana Dept. of Trans., Helena, MT

Eggert, R. Flathead Resource Organization, Dixon, MT. Letter of February 10, 1992 to E.L. Vinson, Montana Dept. of Trans., Helena, MT

Evans, N. Research Assistant to Dave Worthington, Missoula, MT. Pers. Com. of March 4, 1992 with Jeff Ryan, Montana Dept. of Trans., Helena, MT

Foresman, C. Professor University of Montana, Missoula, MT. Pers. Com. with Jeff Ryan, Montana Dept. of Trans., Helena, MT

Fulwiler, R. Montana Dept. of Trans. Maintenance Supervisor, Dixon, MT. Pers. Com. of October 24, 1991 with Jeff Ryan, Montana Dept. of Trans., Helena, MT

Genter, D. Montana Natural Heritage Program, Helena, MT. Pers. Com. of February 29, 1992 with Jeff Ryan, Montana Dept. of Trans., Helena, MT

Harms, D. USFWS, Helena, MT. Letter of February 12, 1992 to E.L. Vinson, Montana Dept. of Trans., Helena, MT

Jackson, L. CS & KT Shoreline Protection Manager, Pablo, MT. Pers. Com. of September 5, 1991 with Jeff Ryan, Montana Dept. of Trans., Helena, MT

LeDeau, G. Flathead Resource Organization Chairman, St. Ignatius, MT. Letter of May 30, 1991 to D.S. Johnson, Montana Dept. of Trans., Helena, MT

Lockart, L. USFWS, Kalispell, MT. Pers. Com. of October 25, 1991 with Jeff Ryan, Montana Dept. of Trans., Helena, MT

Malcolm, J. USFWS, Nine Pipes, MT. Pers. Com. of March 9, 1992 with Jeff Ryan, Montana Dept. of Trans., Helena, MT

Montana Department of Transportation. 1992 Dixon-Ravalli Wetlands Finding

Moriteau, C. CS & KT Warden, Pablo, MT. Pers. Com. of March 9, 1992 with Jeff Ryan, Montana Dept. of Trans., Helena, MT

Ryan, J. Montana Dept. of Trans., Helena, MT. March 9, 1992, March 11, 1992, May 20, 1992, November 27, 1991, August 20, 1990 memos to E.L. Vinson, Montana Dept. of Trans., Helena, MT

Wipperman, A. Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Helena, MT. Letter of March 15, 1991 to E.L. Vinson, Montana Dept. of Trans., Helena, MT

Wood, J.G. USFWS, Billings, MT. Letter of March 8, 1991 to E.L. Vinson, Montana Dept. of Trans., Helena, MT

Worthington, D. University of Montana Graduate Student, Missoula, MT. Pers. Com. of January 3, 1992 with Jeff Ryan, Montana Dept. of Trans., Helena, MT

JR:Q:ENV:yb:45.gg

ATTACHMENTS

F6-1(24)109 CN#0579
DIXON-RAVALLI

EROSION CONTROL WORKPLAN

SURFACE WATER AND/OR WETLANDS

STATION FROM	STATION TO	SIDE LT./RT.	CLASS I 0-15 FT	CLASS II 15-50 FT	CLASS III OVER 50	DESCRIPTION NAME
179	185	L	X			CIF JOCKO R.
203	211	L	X			CIF JOCKO R.
425	435	R	X			IS
435	447	R	X			IS
444	445	L	X			WT 1
389+80	391	L	X			WT 2
380	381	R	X			WT 3
315+50	326	L	X			WT 4
275	289	L	X			WT 5
281+20	287+50	R	X			WT 6
275	278	R	X			WT 7
250+50	254	L	X			WT 8
211+50	245+90	R	X			WT 9
211	246	L	X			WT 10

WETLAND = WT
STREAM/CREEK = BY NAME
IRRIGATION SYSTEM = IS
Note: Send copy to appropriate designer.

WETLANDS FINDING
for
F 6-1(24)109, Control #0579
Dixon - Ravalli

February 18, 1992

1. This FINDING provides documentation that this proposed project will minimize the destruction, loss, or degradation of wetlands. This FINDING also documents the steps to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of the wetlands affected by this proposed project. These statements are based on Executive Order 11990, Section 1(a), and in concurrence with DOT Order #5660.1A.

2. It has been determined that there are no practicable alternatives to this proposed project due to either of the following:

   The "no-build" alternative has been found to be inadequate to meet the needs of the travelling public in this vicinity. This alternate does not correct the poor alignment, narrow width, unsafe conditions, and/or traffic congestion at this location. Any of these conditions have been determined to be sufficient to warrant correction by this proposed project.

3. This proposed project has been determined to include all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands. This determination has been made through the mitigation process described on the following page(s).

4. Based upon the above considerations, it is determined that there is no practicable alternative to the proposed new construction in wetlands and that the proposed project includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands which may result from such use.

JTR:D:ENV:134.mb-3

WETLANDS FINDING
DIXON - RAVALLI
F 6-1(24)109

Description of the Project

This project is located in northwestern Montana in both Sanders and Lake Counties on Montana Highway 200. The project begins at the west end of Dixon and runs easterly for about 7.5 miles to U.S. Junction 93 near Ravalli. The proposed project consists of reconstructing the existing roadway to accommodate a 28-foot wide surface, and updating it to current design specifications.

On 8/15/90 the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and Confederated Salish and Kootenai (CSK) biologists surveyed the area for wetlands and wildlife resources. Wetlands were inventoried using the Cooperative Wetlands Evaluation procedure developed by the Montana Interagency Wetland Group and is in accordance with the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual (USACE 1987). This Wetland Evaluation procedure is acceptable to CSK Tribal Environmental Compliance personnel.

Site Inventory and Description

There are 10 wetland sits and 18 riparian sites that are expected to be impacted by the proposed construction (See Table 1). Wetland function and values and site characteristics have been summarized on the attached wetland field forms. Sites that have similar characteristics have been grouped together on the field forms, and their function and value rankings are summarized in Table 2. These sites are illustrated by the attached representative photos.

The vegetative composition of the 18 riparian sites identified on this project are very similar to the Aspen - Cottonwood dominated wetland sites 7, 9, and 10. The primary reason these sites were classed as riparian was the lack of site saturation or inundation of a sufficient duration to meet the wetland hydric criteria necessary for wetland classification. Please refer to the wetland and riparian site map in the map pocket at the end of this report.

Sites 1, 2, 4, and 5

These wetland sites consist primarily of willow trees with chokecherry bushes that occupy the roadside borrow areas. The majority of them are growing in thicket configurations and connected together by lower density growth. Most of these wetlands are saturated or inundated for the majority of the year, and there is evidence of use by wildlife. Approximately 60% of the wetlands associated with this project are of this type.

Sites 7, 9, and 10

These sites consist of roadside borrow areas that have large cottonwood and aspen trees occupying them. They are saturated or inundated for the majority of the year, and there are large amounts of organic build-up present. Wildlife values are typically high because of the cover and perspective food chain habitat that is offered. At the edges of these sites there are cattails that border the tree line. Approximately 30% of the wetlands associated with this project are of this type.

Sites 3, 6, and 8

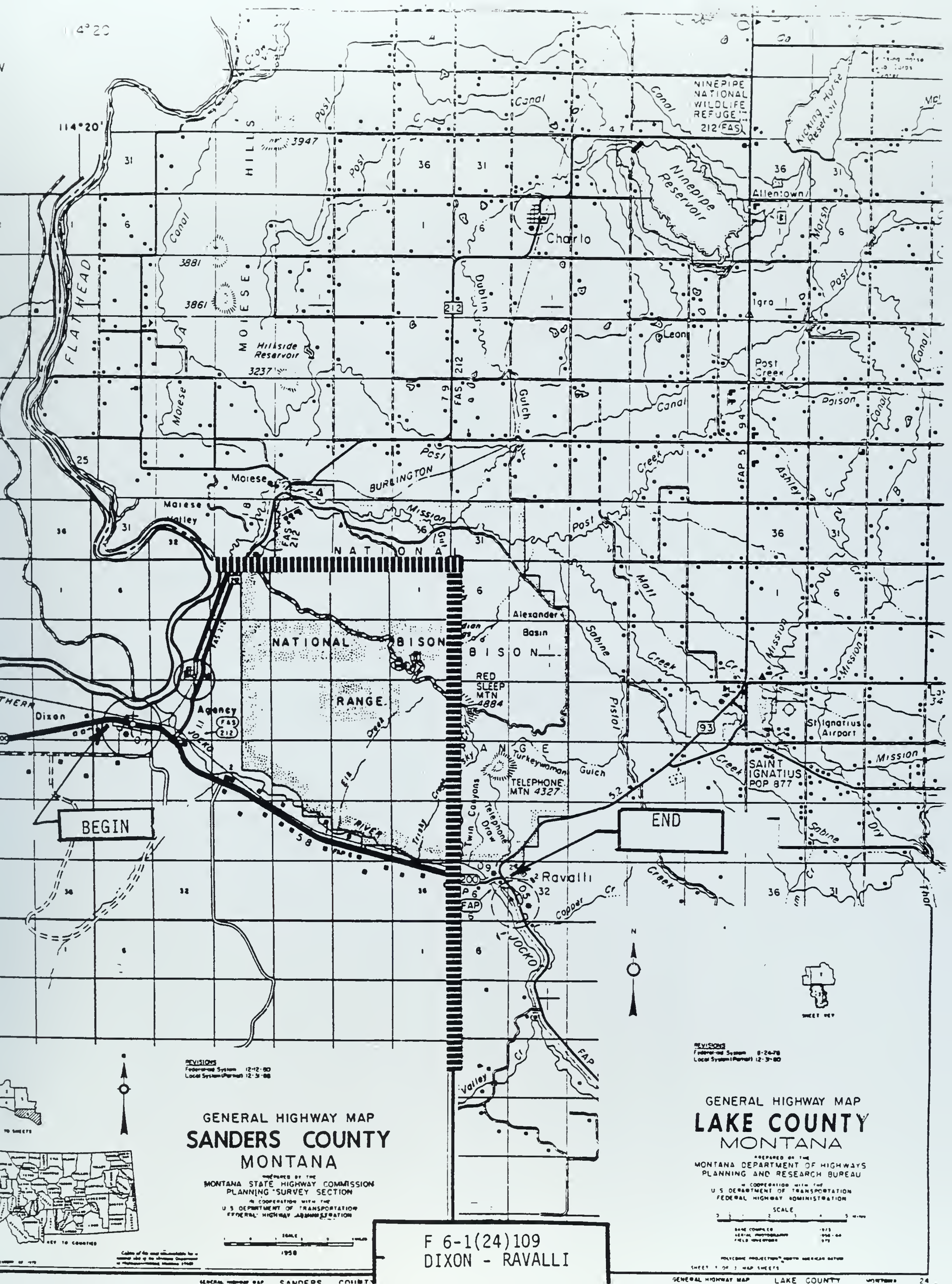
These sites are comprised of borrow areas and low flats that parallel the roadway and are permanently inundated or saturated. Vegetation consists of Bullrush, Sedge, and Poa Species, with some Timothy and Brome in a peripheral band around them. Wildlife values are typically low for these particular areas, but they add to the diversity of habitat within the project area, and contribute to the food chain. Approximately 10% of the wetlands associated with this project are of this type.

Wetlands Impacts and Mitigation

Total wetland area impacted by construction activities involve 14.28 acres. The wetlands associated with this project are primarily borrow areas created by the existing roadway. Irrigation run-off and high ground water are the primary water sources for the wetlands. Riparian areas impacted by construction activities involve 6.25 acres.

Alignment shifts to avoid these wetlands and riparian areas would be neither cost effective nor practicable considering they parallel the roadway on both sides of the project for a majority of its length. Design exception to "narrow" the project is not considered practicable because of increased safety considerations due to a reduced clear zone. Some of the adjacent landowners have expressed an interest in providing on-site mitigation opportunities. These opportunities will be pursued, but due to the anticipated magnitude of the impacts and topographic and hydric restrictions on site, most of the mitigation will probably occur off site. This mitigation will occur within the reservation boundaries of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai (C.S.&K.) Tribe. The final mitigation plan and site location will be determined by the Technical Subcommittee of the Montana Interagency Wetland Group. The C.S.&K. tribal biologist is a member of the Technical Subcommittee. Final mitigation will equal or exceed the function and values of the impacted wetlands and riparian areas.

JTR:Q:ENV:173.mb



F 6-1(24)109
DIXON - RAVALLI

TABLE I
WETLAND AND RIPARIAN IMPACT SITES

WETLANDS

Site No.	Station to Station	Left/Right	(Acres)
4	444 - 445	Left	0.25
2	389+80 - 391	Left	0.22
3	380 - 381	Right	0.01
4	315+50 - 326	Left	1.99
5	275 - 289	Left	2.47
6	281+20 - 287+50	Right	0.04
7	275 - 278	Right	0.04
8	250+50 - 254	Left	1.01
9	211+50 - 245+90	Right	5.97
10	211 - 246	Left	2.31
TOTAL			**14.28**

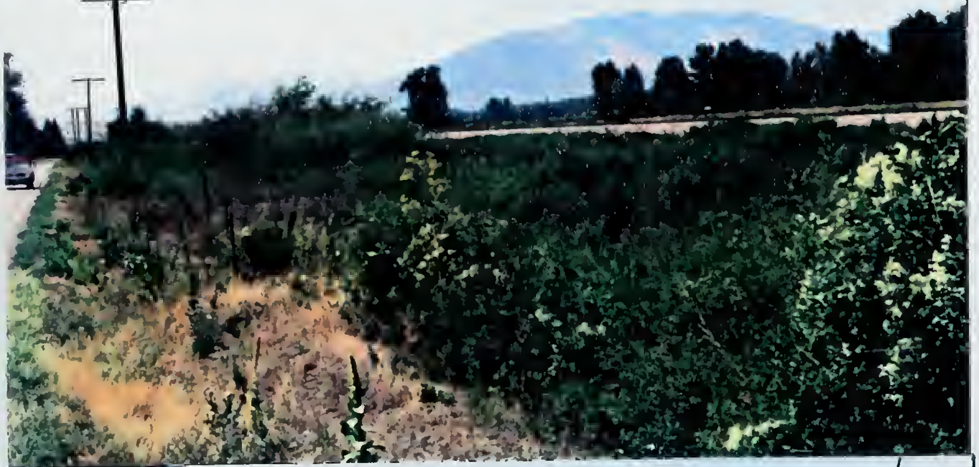
RIPARIAN

Site No.	Station to Station	Left/Right	(Acres)
1	416 - 419	Right	0.23
2	396+50 - 397+20	Right	0.14
3	381+50 - 390+50	Right	0.45
3	373 - 374+50	Right	0.09
5	369 - 370+50	Right	0.12
6	360 - 364	Right	0.28
7	358 - 359+70	Right	0.12
3	343 - 345	Right	0.14
3	316+50 - 318+50	Right	0.09
10	311+50 - 315	Left	0.32
10	267 - 272	Right	0.17
10	261 - 275	Left	1.54
13	199 - 200	Right	0.29
10	194 - 204	Left	0.65
15	181 - 186+50	Left	0.60
16	149+50 - 150+80	Left	0.15
17	137+50 - 138+20	Right	0.93
18	132 - 134	Left	0.04
TOTAL			**6.25**

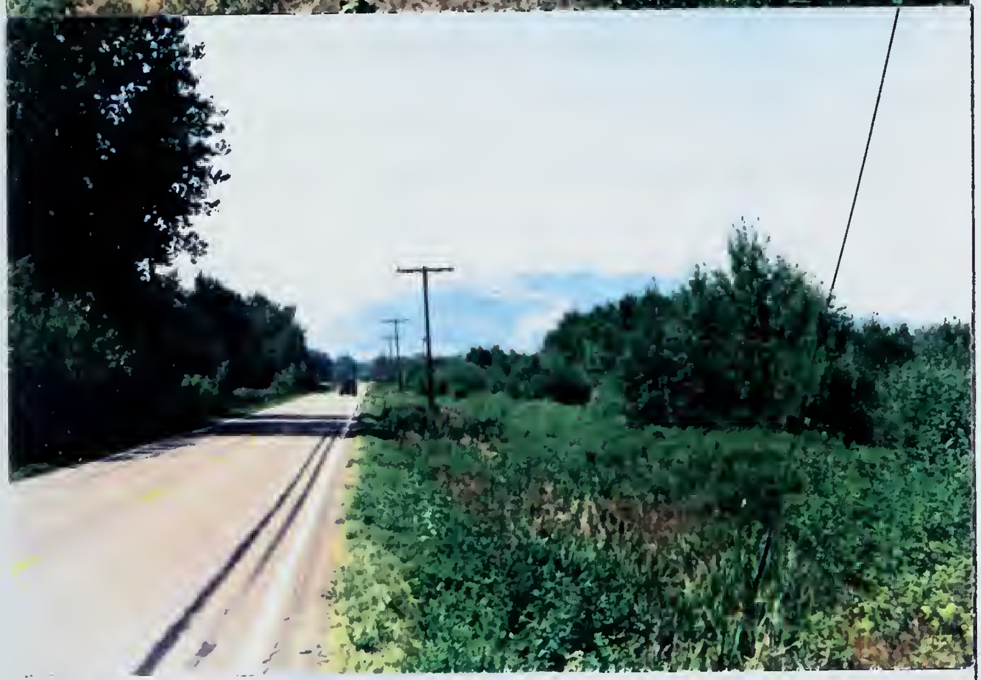
TABLE 2

Summary of Wetland Functional Rankings for Sites 1-10

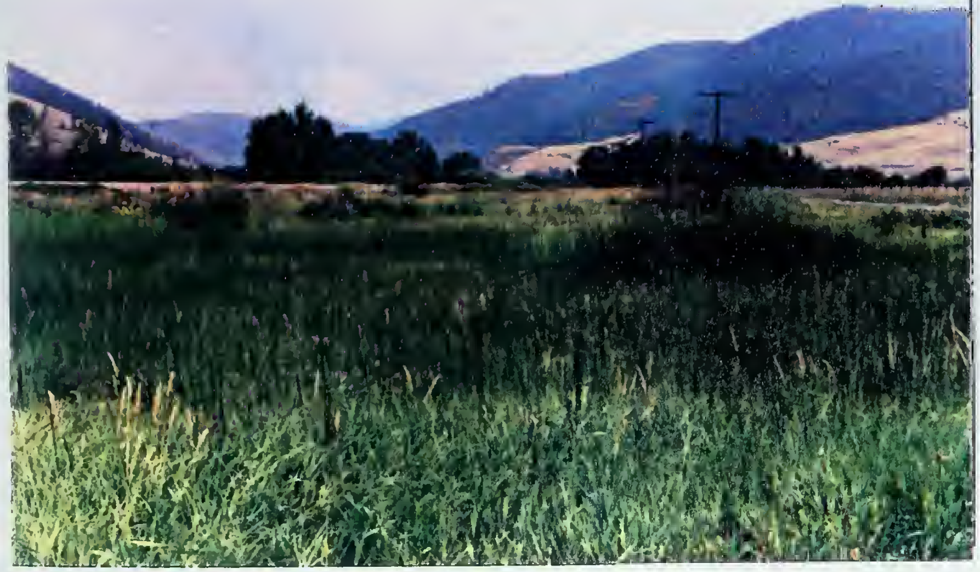
Sites Parameter	Site Functional Ranking (1,2,4,5)	(7,9,10)	(3,6,8)
Habitat Interspersion	2	2	1
Cover: Water Ratio	3	2.5	0.5
Inundation Frequency	1	1	1
Water Flow Rating	2	2	2
Relative Occurrence	2	2	2
Sediment Control	1	2	2
Flood Control 2	2	2	2
Nutrient Retention	2	2	2
Food Chain Production	2	2	1
Wildlife Habitat Value			
Waterfowl	1	1	1
Upland Game Birds	2	2	1
Song Birds	2	2	2
Raptors/Owls	1	2	1
Furbearers	0	0	0
Small Mammals	2	2	2
Ungulates (Deer)	2	2	2
Large Predators	1	1	0
Fisheries Habitat Value			
Montana Fishes of Special Concern	NA	NA	NA
Trout	NA	NA	NA
Other Salmonids	NA	NA	NA
Non-Salmonid Game Fish	NA	NA	NA
Rough or Non-Game Fish	NA	NA	NA



Station 320+00 Lt. This representative photo of Sites 1, 2, 4, and 5 illustrates the wetlands that are dominant by a chokecherry-willow plant community.



Station 280+00 Lt. This representative photo of Sites 7, 9, and 10 illustrates the wetlands that are dominated by aspen and cottonwood trees.



Station 250+00 Lt. This representative photo of Sites 3, 6, and 8 illustrates the wetlands dominated by bull rush, sedge, and poa dominant plant community types.

MDT/MDFWP
WETLAND SITE EVALUATION

Date 8/16/90

Project No. F 6-1(24)109

Project Name Dixon - Ravalli

County Sanders & Lake Drainage Jocko River
R. 21 W. 20 W., T. 18 N., Section NA

Site Location Station (on plan sheet)

Comments (route, milepost, etc.) See sites 1, 2, 4, 5 and representative photo.

1. Classification (from Novitski, 1979)

Hydrologic Type(s) II - Seasonal water Area

Vegetative Type(s) (1) B-Shrub
Dominant Species
(a) Willow
(b) Chokecherry
(c)
(2)
(a)
(b)
(c)
(3)
(a)
(b)
(c)

2. Adjacent Supporting Habitats (Descriptive Summary)
Wetlands (type, vegetation, area, location, condition, wildlife values)
Adjacent wetlands primarily consist of both large trees (cottonwoods, aspen) and cattail lined ditches. Both areas are inundated most of the growing season, wildlife values are moderate to good, because these areas provide cover and forage for some big game animals (deer, bear).

Uplands (vegetation type, area, location, condition, land use, erosion potential, wildlife values)
Uplands consists of rolling foothills and mountainous terrain. Vegetation consists of fescue, western, and bluebunch wheatgrass. Erosion potential is low due to

the stability of the topsoil; wildlife values are high because of the diversity and amount of supporting habitat.

3. Relative Commonness of Wetland Type in Area **Common**
(1) abundant (2) **common** (3) rare

4. Degree of Habitat Interspersion
Low = 1 Moderate = [✓ 2] High = 3

5. Vegetative Cover Characteristics of Flooded Wetlands.
(not applicable to non-flooded wetlands)

		Rating
a.	Cover occupies more than 95% of wetland	0.5
b.	Cover occupies 76-95% of wetland in a peripheral band	1.5
c.	Cover occupies 76-95% of wetland with scattered open water areas	2.5
d.	Cover occupies 26-75% of wetland occurring in dense patches or diffuse open stands	**3.0**
e.	Cover occupies 26-75% of wetland in a peripheral band	2.0
f.	Cover occupies 5-25% of wetland occurring in a peripheral band or diffuse open stands	1.0
g.	Cover occupies less than 5% of the wetland	0.5

6.	Inundation Frequency	Rating
a.	Temporary surface water or saturated soil	**1**
b.	Seasonally or intermittently flooded	2
c.	Semi-permanent or permanently flooded	3

7.	Sediment Control/Load Rating Criteria	Rating
a.	Wetland does not receive detectable amounts of sediment - the watercourse is relatively sediment-free and accumulations are not evident	[✓ 1]

b. Wetland receives some sediment load but not enough to impact the plants or aquatic organisms using the site. The watercourse has sediment accumulations, but the water is not normally turbid 2

c. Wetland receives heavy sediment loads that has impacted the plant/animal growth/use of the site. The watercourse has large accumulations of sediment and the water is usually turbid 3

8. Water Flow Rating Criteria

a. Most of the water flows through the wetland in distinct channels or watercourses or has little flow of surface water during the year 1

b. Channels of watercourses present, but a significant portion of water is sheet flow through the wetland 2

c. Water flows across wetland uniformly and is not contained in channels or watercourses 3

9. Nutrient Retention Capabilities
(circle one ranking)

a. Non-contiguous wetland with little accumulation of organic matter 1

b. Non-contiguous wetland with organic material accumulation .... [✓ 2]

c. Contiguous wetland with little accumulation of organic matter 2.5

d. Contiguous wetland with organic material accumulation 3

10. Relative Flood Storage Potential

a. Section 8, line a; Section 6, line a 1

b. Section 8, line b; Section 6, line b .... [✓ 2]

c. Section 8, line c; Section 6, line c 3

11. Relative Food Chain Support Potential (Based on percent vegetative cover and estimated relative standing crop).

a. Low (vegetative cover less than 5%; non-contiguous; no accumulation of organic matter) 1

b. Moderate (vegetative cover 6-25%; contiguous or non-contiguous to other supporting habitats; some accumulation of organic material) .... [✓ 2]

c. High (vegetative cover 26-100%; contiguous to other supporting habitats, some accumulation of organic material) 3

12. Wildlife Habitat Values (Overall) (Based on cover, diversity, supporting habitats, and productivity)

Evaluation Group or Species	Rating (0-3)
a. Waterfowl	0
b. Upland Game Birds	2
c. Songbirds	2
d. Raptors and Others	1
e. Furbearers	0
f. Non-furbearing small mammals	2
g. Large Ungulates (elk, moose, deer)	2
h. Large Carnivores (bear, cat)	1
i. Threatened or Endangered Species	1

Evaluate utilization by waterfowl/wildlife of wetland site for nesting, rearing young, feeding or protective cover based upon the following criteria (high, medium, low).

Use by wildlife group is significant in that loss or reduction by the wildlife use would have an adverse effect on the population of the species or wildlife in the general area (township) 3

Use by wildlife group is evident or probably and loss or reduction of the wildlife use may have an adverse effect on the local wildlife population (surrounding section[s]) 2

Use by wildlife group is low or incidental in that loss or reduction of the wildlife use would have a negligible effect on the local wildlife population . 1

Use by wildlife group is non-existent at any time during any year. NOTE: Use .3 to signify occasional use 0

13. Estimate utilization by fish for spawning, nursery, feeding, or cover.

a.	Montana fishes of special concern	NA
b.	Trout "brookies"	NA
c.	Other Salmonids	NA
d.	Non-Salmonid Game Fish (pike, bass, walleyes)	NA
e.	Non-Game or Rough Fish	NA

Use by fish is significant in that loss or reduction of the fish use would have an adverse effect on the population of the fish in adjacent waters 3

Use by fish is evident or probably and loss or reduction of the fish use may have an adverse effect on the population of fish in the immediate vicinity but the magnitude of the reduction would be insignificant in relation to the total population of fish in adjacent waters 2

Use by fish is low or incidental in that loss or reduction of the fish use would have negligible effect on the population of fish in the immediate vicinity 1

Use by fish never present at any time in the year 0

14. Recreational Use Potential .... [✓ 1] 2 3

15. Summary of Functional Values and Overall Site Ranking

Sediment control rating	1/3
Nutrient retention rating	2/3
Relative flood storage rating	2/3
Relative food chain support	2/3

Wildlife Habitat Values

Highest (Evaluation Group ____) 2/3

Lowest (Evaluation Group ____) 0/3

Fisheries Habitat Values

Highest (Evaluation Group ____) 0/3

Lowest (Evaluation Group ____) 0/3

9/24

JTR:Q:ENV:174.mb

DATA FORM

Date: 9/20/91

Project Site: Dixon - Ravalli

State: MT County: Sanders/Lake

Applicant/Owner: F 6-1(24)109

Plant Community #/Name: Sites 1,2,4,5

Note: If a more detailed site description is necessary use the back of data form or a field notebook.

VEGETATION

Dominant Plant Species	Indicator Status	Stratum	Dominant Plant Species	Indicator Status	Stratum
1. Salix Exigua	OBL	Shrub	7.		
2. Prunus Virginiana	FACU	Shrub	8.		
3.			9.		
4.			10.		
5.			11.		
6.			12.		

Percent of dominant species that are OBL, FACW, and/or FAC >50

Is the hydrophytic vegetation criterion met? Yes X No

Rationale: Although randum stratified sampling was not used, ocular estimates support the hydric vegetation dominance judgement. Salix is the dominant.

SOILS

Series/Phase: Unknown Organic

Subgroup: Unknown

Is the soil on the hydric soils list? Yes No

Undetermined X

Is the soil a Histosol? Yes No Unknown

Histic epipedon present? Yes No

Is the soil: Mottled? Yes No Unknown

Gleyed? Yes No

Matrix Color: Unknown

Mottle Colors:

Other hydric soil indicators:

Is the hydric soil criterion met? Yes X No

Rationale: Although the soil type was unknown, the saturation indicates a hydric soil.

HYDROLOGY

Is the ground surface inundated? Yes X No

Surface Water Depth:

Is the soil saturated? Yes X No

Depth to free-standing water in pit/soil probe hole: Unknown

List other field evidence of surface inundation or soil saturation. Water at surface is common.

Is the wetland hydrology criterion met? Yes X No

Rationale: Saturation or inundation appears to be present a majority of the growing season.

JURISDICTIONAL DETERMINATION AND RATIONALE

Is the plant community a wetland? Yes X No

Rationale for jurisdictional decision: The three criteria appear to be met.

MDT/MDFWP
WETLAND SITE EVALUATION

Date 8/16/90

Project No. F 6-1(24)109

Project Name Dixon - Ravalli

County Sanders & Lake Drainage Jocko River
R. 21 W. & 20 W., T. 18 N., Section NA

Site Location Station (on plan sheet)

Comments (route, milepost, etc.) See Sites 7, 9, 10, and representative photo.

1. Classification (from Novitski, 1979)

Hydrologic Type(s) II - Seasonal Water Area

Vegetative Type(s) (1) B - Shrub
Dominant Species
- (a) Cottonwood
- (b) Aspen
- (c) Willow

(2) A - Herbaceous
- (a) Cattail
- (b)
- (c)

(3)
- (a)
- (b)
- (c)

2. Adjacent Supporting Habitats (Descriptive Summary)
Wetlands (type, vegetation, area, location, condition, wildlife values)
Adjacent wetlands consist of areas where water collects from both borrow and natural drainages. Vegetation consists of willow, cattail, sedge, and rush. Wildlife values are moderate to high, because these areas are contributed to the diversity of habitat within the corridor.

Uplands (vegetation type, area, location, condition, land use, erosion potential, wildlife values)
Uplands consist of rolling foothills and mountainous terrain. Vegetation consists of fescue, western, and bluebunch wheatgrass. Erosive potential is low because the condition of native grasses stabilizes the topsoil.

3. Relative Commonness of Wetland Type in Area **Common**
(1) abundant (2) **common** (3) rare

4. Degree of Habitat Interspersion
Low = 1 Moderate = [✓ 2] High = 3

5. Vegetative Cover Characteristics of Flooded Wetlands.
(not applicable to non-flooded wetlands)

		Rating
a.	Cover occupies more than 95% of wetland	0.5
b.	Cover occupies 76-95% of wetland in a peripheral band	1.5
c.	Cover occupies 76-95% of wetland with scattered open water areas	**2.5**
d.	Cover occupies 26-75% of wetland occurring in dense patches or diffuse open stands	3.0
e.	Cover occupies 26-75% of wetland in a peripheral band	2.0
f.	Cover occupies 5-25% of wetland occurring in a peripheral band or diffuse open stands	1.0
g.	Cover occupies less than 5% of the wetland	0.5

6. Inundation Frequency

		Rating
a.	Temporary surface water or saturated soil	[✓ 1]
b.	Seasonally or intermittently flooded	2
c.	Semi-permanent or permanently flooded	3

7. Sediment Control/Load Rating Criteria

		Rating
a.	Wetland does not receive detectable amounts of sediment - the watercourse is relatively sediment-free and accumulations are not evident	1
b.	Wetland receives some sediment load but not enough to impact the plants or aquatic organisms using the site. The watercourse has sediment accumulations, but the water is not normally turbid	[✓ 2]

c. Wetland receives heavy sediment loads that has impacted the plant/animal growth/use of the site. The watercourse has large accumulations of sediment and the water is usually turbid 3

8. Water Flow Rating Criteria

a. Most of the water flows through the wetland in distinct channels or watercourses or has little flow of surface water during the year 1

b. Channels of watercourses present, but a significant portion of water is sheet flow through the wetland .... [✓ 2]

c. Water flows across wetland uniformly and is not contained in channels or watercourses 3

9. Nutrient Retention Capabilities (circle one ranking)

a. Non-contiguous wetland with little accumulation of organic matter 1

b. Non-contiguous wetland with organic material accumulation .... [✓ 2]

c. Contiguous wetland with little accumulation of organic matter 2.5

d. Contiguous wetland with organic material accumulation 3

10. Relative Flood Storage Potential

a. Section 8, line a; Section 6, line a 1

b. Section 8, line b; Section 6, line b 2

c. Section 8, line c; Section 6, line c 3

11. Relative Food Chain Support Potential (Based on percent vegetative cover and estimated relative standing crop).

a. Low (vegetative cover less than 5%; non-contiguous; no accumulation of organic matter) 1

b. Moderate (vegetative cover 6-25%; contiguous or non-contiguous to other supporting habitats; some accumulation of organic material) 2

c. High (vegetative cover 26-100%; contiguous to other supporting habitats, some accumulation of organic material) 3

12. Wildlife Habitat Values (Overall) Rating (0-3)
(Based on cover, diversity, supporting habitats, and productivity)

Evaluation Group or Species
a. Waterfowl 1
b. Upland Game Birds 2
c. Songbirds 2
d. Raptors and Others 2
e. Furbearers 0
f. Non-furbearing small mammals 2
g. Large Ungulates (elk, moose, deer) 2
h. Large Carnivores (bear, cat) 1
i. Threatened or Endangered Species 0

Evaluate utilization by waterfowl/wildlife of wetland site for nesting, rearing young, feeding or protective cover based upon the following criteria (high, medium, low).

Use by wildlife group is significant in that loss or reduction by the wildlife use would have an adverse effect on the population of the species or wildlife in the general area (township) 3

Use by wildlife group is evident or probably and loss or reduction of the wildlife use may have an adverse effect on the local wildlife population (surrounding section[s]) 2

Use by wildlife group is low or incidental in that loss or reduction of the wildlife use would have a negligible effect on the local wildlife population . 1

Use by wildlife group is non-existent at any time during any year. NOTE: Use .3 to signify occasional use 0

13. Estimate utilization by fish for spawning, nursery, feeding, or cover.

a.	Montana fishes of special concern	NA
b.	Trout "brookies"	NA
c.	Other Salmonids	NA
d.	Non-Salmonid Game Fish (pike, bass, walleyes)	NA
e.	Non-Game or Rough Fish	NA

Use by fish is significant in that loss or reduction of the fish use would have an adverse effect on the population of the fish in adjacent waters 3

Use by fish is evident or probably and loss or reduction of the fish use may have an adverse effect on the population of fish in the immediate vicinity but the magnitude of the reduction would be insignificant in relation to the total population of fish in adjacent waters 2

Use by fish is low or incidental in that loss or reduction of the fish use would have negligible effect on the population of fish in the immediate vicinity 1

Use by fish never present at any time in the year 0

14. Recreational Use Potential .... 1 / 2 / 3

15. Summary of Functional Values and Overall Site Ranking

Sediment control rating	2/3
Nutrient retention rating	2/3
Relative flood storage rating	2/3
Relative food chain support	2/3
Wildlife Habitat Values	
Highest (Evaluation Group ____)	2/3
Lowest (Evaluation Group ____)	0/3
Fisheries Habitat Values	
Highest (Evaluation Group ____)	0/3
Lowest (Evaluation Group ____)	0/3

10/24

JTR:Q:ENV:175.mb

DATA FORM

Date: 9/20/91

Project Site: Dixon - Ravalli

State: MT County: Sanders/Lake

Applicant/Owner: F 6-1(24)109

Plant Community #/Name: Sites 7,9,10

Note: If a more detailed site description is necessary use the back of data form or a field notebook.

VEGETATION

Dominant Plant Species	Indicator Status	Stratum	Dominant Plant Species	Indicator Status	Stratum
1. Salix Exigua	OBL	Shrub	7.		
2. Populus Angustifolia	FACW	Tree	8.		
3. Populus Tremula	FACT	Tree	9.		
4. Typha Latifolia	OBL	Herb	10.		
5.			11.		
6.			12.		

Percent of dominant species that are OBL, FACW, and/or FAC >50

Is the hydrophytic vegetation criterion met? Yes X No

Rationale: Although randum stratified sampling was not used, ocular estimates support the hydric vegetation dominance judgement.

SOILS

Series/Phase: Unknown Organic

Subgroup: Unknown

Is the soil on the hydric soils list? Yes No Undetermined X

Is the soil a Histosol? Yes No Unknown

Histic epipedon present? Yes No

Is the soil: Mottled? Yes No Unknown

Gleyed? Yes No

Matrix Color: Unknown

Mottle Colors:

Other hydric soil indicators:

Is the hydric soil criterion met? Yes X No

Rationale: Although the soil type was unknown, the saturation indicates a hydric soil.

HYDROLOGY

Is the ground surface inundated? Yes X No

Surface Water Depth:

Is the soil saturated? Yes X No

Depth to free-standing water in pit/soil probe hole: Unknown

List other field evidence of surface inundation or soil saturation. Water at surface is common.

Is the wetland hydrology criterion met? Yes X No

Rationale: Saturation appears to be present all year.

JURISDICTIONAL DETERMINATION AND RATIONALE

Is the plant community a wetland? Yes X No

Rationale for jurisdictional decision: The three criteria appear to be met.

MDT/MDFWP
WETLAND SITE EVALUATION

Date 8/16/90

Project No. F 6-1(24)109

Project Name Dixon - Ravalli

County Sanders & Lake Drainage Jocko River
R. 21 W., 20 W., T. 18 N., Section NA

Site Location Station (on plan sheet)

Comments (route, milepost, etc.) See Sites 3, 6, 8, and representative photo.

1. Classification (from Novitski, 1979)

Hydrologic Type(s) II - Seasonal Water Area

Vegetative Type(s) (1) A - Herbaceous
Dominant Species
(a) Rush
(b) Sedge
(c) Poa
(2)
(a)
(b)
(c)
(3)
(a)
(b)
(c)

2. Adjacent Supporting Habitats (Descriptive Summary)
Wetlands (type, vegetation, area, location, condition, wildlife values)
Adjacent wetlands are areas where water collects from both natural and borrow drainages. Vegetation consists of willow, cottonwood, chokecherry, and cattail. Wildlife values are moderate because these areas contribute to the food chain within this area.

Uplands (vegetation type, area, location, condition, land use, erosion potential, wildlife values)
Uplands consist of rolling foothills and mountainous terrain. Vegetation consists of fescue, western, and bluebunch wheatgrass. Erosion potential is low because

the condition of native grasses stabilizes the topsoil. Wildlife values are high because of the diversity and amount of supporting habitat.

3. Relative Commonness of Wetland Type in Area **Rare**
(1) abundant (2) common (3) **rare**

4. Degree of Habitat Interspersion
Low = [✓ 1] Moderate = 2 High = 3

5. Vegetative Cover Characteristics of Flooded Wetlands. (not applicable to non-flooded wetlands)

		Rating
a.	Cover occupies more than 95% of wetland	[✓ 0.5]
b.	Cover occupies 76-95% of wetland in a peripheral band	1.5
c.	Cover occupies 76-95% of wetland with scattered open water areas	2.5
d.	Cover occupies 26-75% of wetland occurring in dense patches or diffuse open stands	3.0
e.	Cover occupies 26-75% of wetland in a peripheral band	2.0
f.	Cover occupies 5-25% of wetland occurring in a peripheral band or diffuse open stands	1.0
g.	Cover occupies less than 5% of the wetland	0.5

6. Inundation Frequency

		Rating
a.	Temporary surface water or saturated soil	1
b.	Seasonally or intermittently flooded	2
c.	Semi-permanent or permanently flooded	[✓ 3]

7. Sediment Control/Load Rating Criteria

		Rating
a.	Wetland does not receive detectable amounts of sediment - the watercourse is relatively sediment-free and accumulations are not evident	1

b. Wetland receives some sediment load but not enough to impact the plants or aquatic organisms using the site. The watercourse has sediment accumulations, but the water is not normally turbid .... [✓ 2]

c. Wetland receives heavy sediment loads that has impacted the plant/animal growth/use of the site. The watercourse has large accumulations of sediment and the water is usually turbid 3

8. Water Flow Rating Criteria

a. Most of the water flows through the wetland in distinct channels or watercourses or has little flow of surface water during the year 1

b. Channels of watercourses present, but a significant portion of water is sheet flow through the wetland .... [✓ 2]

c. Water flows across wetland uniformly and is not contained in channels or watercourses 3

9. Nutrient Retention Capabilities
(circle one ranking)

a. Non-contiguous wetland with little accumulation of organic matter 1

b. Non-contiguous wetland with organic material accumulation .... [✓ 2]

c. Contiguous wetland with little accumulation of organic matter 2.5

d. Contiguous wetland with organic material accumulation 3

10. Relative Flood Storage Potential

a. Section 8, line a; Section 6, line a 1

b. Section 8, line b; Section 6, line b .... [✓ 2]

c. Section 8, line c; Section 6, line c 3

11. Relative Food Chain Support Potential (Based on percent vegetative cover and estimated relative standing crop).

a. Low (vegetative cover less than 5%; non-contiguous; no accumulation of organic matter) .... [✓ 1]

b. Moderate (vegetative cover 6-25%; contiguous or non-contiguous to other supporting habitats; some accumulation of organic material) 2

c. High (vegetative cover 26-100%; contiguous to other supporting habitats, some accumulation of organic material) 3

12. Wildlife Habitat Values (Overall) Rating (0-3)
(Based on cover, diversity, supporting habitats, and productivity)

Evaluation Group or Species
a. Waterfowl 1
b. Upland Game Birds 1
c. Songbirds 2
d. Raptors and Others 1
e. Furbearers 0
f. Non-furbearing small mammals 2
g. Large Ungulates (elk, moose, deer) 2
h. Large Carnivores (bear, cat) 0
i. Threatened or Endangered Species 1

Evaluate utilization by waterfowl/wildlife of wetland site for nesting, rearing young, feeding or protective cover based upon the following criteria (high, medium, low).

Use by wildlife group is significant in that loss or reduction by the wildlife use would have an adverse effect on the population of the species or wildlife in the general area (township) 3

Use by wildlife group is evident or probably and loss or reduction of the wildlife use may have an adverse effect on the local wildlife population (surrounding section[s]) 2

Use by wildlife group is _low_ or incidental in that loss or reduction of the wildlife use would have a negligible effect on the local wildlife population . 1

Use by wildlife group is non-existent at any time during any year. NOTE: Use .3 to signify occasional use 0

13. Estimate utilization by fish for spawning, nursery, feeding, or cover.

a. Montana fishes of special concern NA
b. Trout "brookies" NA
c. Other Salmonids NA
d. Non-Salmonid Game Fish (pike, bass, walleyes) NA
e. Non-Game or Rough Fish NA

Use by fish is _significant_ in that loss or reduction of the fish use would have an adverse effect on the population of the fish in adjacent waters 3

Use by fish is _evident_ or probably and loss or reduction of the fish use may have an adverse effect on the population of fish in the immediate vicinity but the magnitude of the reduction would be insignificant in relation to the total population of fish in adjacent waters 2

Use by fish is _low_ or incidental in that loss or reduction of the fish use would have negligible effect on the population of fish in the immediate vicinity 1

Use by fish never present at any time in the year 0

14. Recreational Use Potential 1 2 3

15. Summary of Functional Values and Overall Site Ranking

Sediment control rating 2/3
Nutrient retention rating 2/3
Relative flood storage rating 2/3
Relative food chain support 1/3

Wildlife Habitat Values	
Highest (Evaluation Group ____)	2/3
Lowest (Evaluation Group ____)	0/3
Fisheries Habitat Values	
Highest (Evaluation Group ____)	0/3
Lowest (Evaluation Group ____)	0/3
	9/24

JTR:Q:ENV:176.mb

DATA FORM

Date: 9/20/91
Project Site: Dixon - Ravalli
State: MT County: Sanders/Lake
Applicant/Owner: F 6-1(24)109
Plant Community #/Name: Sites 3,6,8

Note: If a more detailed site description is necessary use the back of data form or a field notebook.

VEGETATION

Dominant Plant Species	Indicator Status	Stratum	Dominant Plant Species	Indicator Status	Stratum
1. Juncus Balticus	OBL	Herb	7.		
2. Carex Flava	OBL	Herb	8.		
3. POA Pratensis	FACUT	Grass	9.		
4.			10.		
5.			11.		
6.			12.		

Percent of dominant species that are OBL, FACW, and/or FAC >50
Is the hydrophytic vegetation criterion met? Yes X No
Rationale: Although randum stratified sampling was not used, ocular estimates support the hydric vegetation dominance judgement.

SOILS

Series/Phase: Unknown Organic
Subgroup: Unknown
Is the soil on the hydric soils list? Yes No
Undetermined X
Is the soil a Histosol? Yes No Unknown
Histic epipedon present? Yes No
Is the soil: Mottled? Yes No Unknown
Gleyed? Yes No
Matrix Color: Unknown
Mottle Colors:
Other hydric soil indicators:
Is the hydric soil criterion met? Yes X No
Rationale: Although the soil type was unknown, the saturation indicates a hydric soil.

HYDROLOGY

Is the ground surface inundated? Yes X No
Surface Water Depth:
Is the soil saturated? Yes X No
Depth to free-standing water in pit/soil probe hole: Unknown
List other field evidence of surface inundation or soil saturation. Standing water is common.
Is the wetland hydrology criterion met? Yes X No
Rationale: Saturation or inundation appears to be present most of the year.

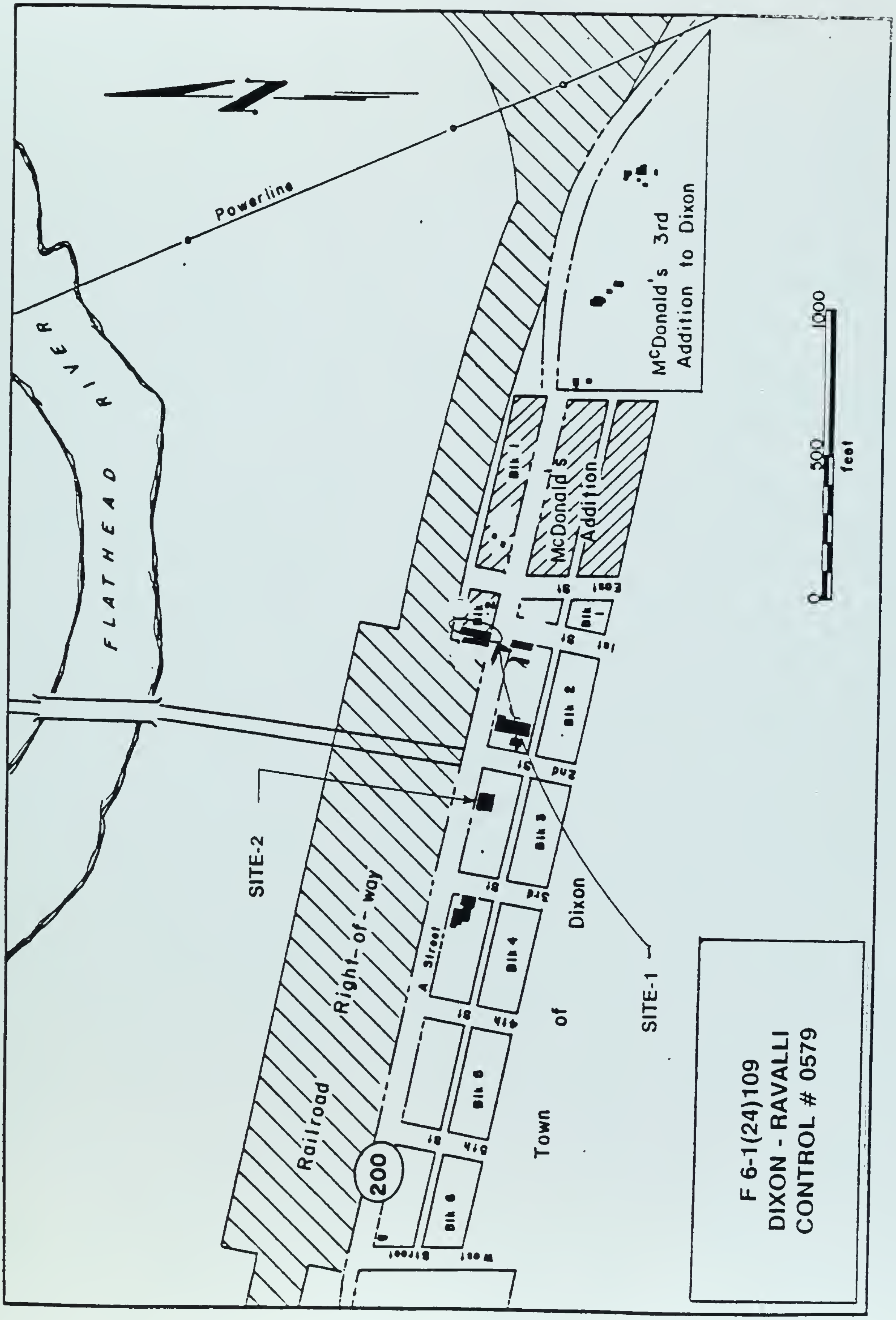
JURISDICTIONAL DETERMINATION AND RATIONALE

Is the plant community a wetland? Yes X No
Rationale for jurisdictional decision: The three criteria appear to be met.

APPENDIX B

HAZARDOUS WASTE POTENTIAL ☞

VICINITY MAP
OF
POTENTIAL HAZARDOUS WASTE



F 6-1(24)109
DIXON - RAVALLI
CONTROL # 0579

APPENDIX C

PROJECT CORRESPONDENCE ☞

State Historic Preservation Office
Montana Historical Society
Mailing Address: 225 North Roberts • Helena, MT 59620-9990
Office Address: 102 Broadway • Helena, MT • (406) 444-7715

January 17, 1990

Mitzi Rossillon, Archaeologist
Montana Department of Highways
2701 Prospect Avenue
Helena, MT 59620

Re: Dixon-Ravalli
F 6-1(24)109

Dear Mitzi:

Thank you for requesting our review and comments on the HRA report prepared for the project referenced above. We concur with their methods and results. Like you, however, we do think there have been too many alterations to the Kady Property to still consider it eligible for Register listing. We concur with both HRA and your agency that Jeannot's Store (24LA277) and the Johnson Barn (24LA103) will qualify. The store is eligible under Criteria A and C, while the barn qualifies under C only. The latter property is a borderline call, for although the craftsmanship apparent on the main structure is certainly exceptional, the additions have somewhat altered the building's scale and massing. We agree, however, that given the usual vernacular log forms of barns in Montana, the "in keeping with" argument is appropriate.

We will anticipate concluding evaluation of the Jocko Canal at a later date, either under the proposed agreement or individually, as necessary.

As always, we appreciate the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Kathy

Katherine M. Huppe
Historical Survey Reviewer

File: Comp/MDOH/Dixon-Ravalli
CD files(2)

Date Recd. Preconst 1/18/90

Act	Info	MAIL ROUTE	Attach	Initial
	✓	30 Preconst Engr		
	✓	30 Assistant		
		30 Office Mgr		
	✓	32 Road Design		
	✓	33 Environment		
		34 Hydraulics		
		35 Survey & Mapping		
		3[illegible] Traffic		
		39 Consultant		
	✓	[illegible]		
	✓	File		

State Historic Preservation Office
Montana Historical Society
Mailing Address: 225 North Roberts • Helena, MT 59620-9990
Office Address: 102 Broadway • Helena, MT • (406) 444-7715

September 19, 1990

Edrie L. Vinson, Supervisor
Environmental Section
Preconstruction
Montana Department of Highways
2701 Prospect Avenue
Helena, MT 59620

RE: F 6-1(24)109
Dixon - Ravalli

Dear Edrie:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the findings of effect that you reached for the project identified above.

We concur with your finding that the project will have an effect on the qualities that contribute to the significance of Jeannot's Store (24SA277) and Johnson's Barn (24LA103), but that the changes or effects are not so severe as to be adverse. Hence, this correspondence can be forwarded to the Advisory Council with your material for a "no adverse effect" finding.

I was not able to verify that the Programmatic Agreement on Treatment of Irrigation Ditches had been signed by the Advisory Council. Obviously, the canals affected by this project will be covered if the Agreement is formally signed prior to completion of planning and environmental work for the project.

Sincerely,

Kathy Huppe
Katherine Huppe
Historical Survey Reviewer

File: COMP/MDOH/Dixon-Ravalli

Date Recd. Preconst. 9/21/90

Act	Info	MAIL ROUTE	Attach	Initial
	✓	30 Preconst Engr		
	✓	30 Assistant		
		30 Office Mgr		
	✓	32 Road Design		
	✓	33 Environment		
		34 Hydraulics		
		35 Survey & Mapping		
		36 Traffic		
	✓	39 Consultant		
	✓	Weaver		
	✓	File		

MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM

1515 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, Montana 59620
(406) ~~444~~-3009

Date Recd. Preconst. 3/8/91

Act	Info	MAIL ROUTE	Attach	Initial
	✓	30 Preconst Engr		
	✓	30 Assistant		
		30 Office Mgr		
		32 Road Design		
	✓	33 Environment	✓	
		34 Hydraulics		
		35 Survey & Mapping		
		36 Traffic		
		39 Consultant		
	✓	[illegible]		
	✓	[illegible]		
	✓	[illegible]		
	✓			
	✓	File		

March 7, 1991

Edrie L. Vinson
Department of Highways
Environmental Section
2701 Prospect Avenue
Helena, Montana 59620

Dear Ms. Vinson:

In response to your request, we checked our databases for information on sensitive species in the vicinity of three highway projects.

Complete element occurrence records are attached. To summarize the results of the data search:

Dixon - Ravalli:

A bald eagle nest site falls within 2.5 miles of the project area. This may require special consideration due to its federal Endangered Species status. For appropriate management recommendations, please contact Mr. Dennis Flath, FWP in Bozeman, and Mr. Rob Hazelwood of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Helena.

Townsend - Toston:

Great blue heron and double-crested cormorant rookeries are located in the vicinity of the Townsend-Toston project area. Although these species are "common," we keep track of rookeries and colonial-nesting birds because of their dependence on high-density nesting areas.

This highway stretch also passes through extensive wetlands which may warrant special consideration. For more information on these wetlands, you might want to contact Mr. Tom Carlson, Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks in Townsend, or Mr. Jeff Herbert from the Helena FWP office.

MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM
Species of Special Concern:
Vicinity of Dixon-Ravalli Project

Name: HALIAEETUS LEUCOCEPHALUS
Common Name: BALD EAGLE

Global rank: G3
Forest Service status: ENDANGERED
State rank: S3
Federal Status: LELT

Element occurrence code: ABNKC10010.053

Survey site name: AGENCY
EO rank:
EO rank comments: CURRENT (1990)

County: SANDERS

USGS quadrangle: DIXON

Township-range: 018N021W Section: 08 Precision: M
Township-range comments:

Survey date:
Elevation: 2520
First observation:
Slope/aspect:
Last observation: 1989
Size (acres): 4000

Location:
FROM DIXON, GO EAST 1.0 MILE TO JUNCTION, THEN NORTH 1.5 MILES TO JUST PAST AGENCY.

Element occurrence data:
NEST SITE AND TERRITORY OCCUPIED IN 1988. 1987:3 FLEDGED. 1988: 3 FLEDGED. 1989: 2 FLEDGED.

General site description:
ON ISLAND.

Land owner/manager:
FLATHEAD INDIAN RESERVATION

Comments:
NONE.

Information source:
FLATH, DENNIS. FWP BUILDING, MSU CAMPUS, BOZEMAN, MT 59717-0001. (406) 994-6354.

Date Recd. Preconst. 3/11/91
MAIL ROUTE
Act | Info | Attach | Initial
✓ 30 Preconst Engr
✓ 30 Assistant
30 Office Mgr
✓ 32 Road Design
33 Environment
✓ 34 Hydraulics
35 Survey & Mapping
36 Traffic
3? Consultant
✓ File

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Fish and Wildlife Enhancement
Federal Building, U.S. Courthouse
301 South Park
P.O. Drawer 10023
Helena, Montana 59626

IN REPLY REFER TO:

FWE-61130-Billings
M.17-FHWA Informal FY91

March 8, 1991

Ms. Edrie L. Vinson
Montana Department of Highways
2701 Prospect Avenue
Helena, Montana 59620

Dear Ms. Vinson:

This responds to your March 1, 1991 letter concerning Montana Department of Highways Project 6-1(24)109, (C#579), Dixon-Ravalli, and requesting identification of the threatened and endangered species that should be considered in connection with this project. Your letter also invited other comments we may have.

The Federally-listed endangered and threatened species which occur or may occur within the project area are the bald eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus) and peregrine falcon (Falco peregrinus). Pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, the Federal Highway Administration, as the responsible Federal agency, must determine if the proposed actions may affect these endangered species. If you or the Federal Highway Administration determine that any of these species may be affected, it will be necessary to initiate formal consultation with this office. The following information and recommendations may aid you in that determination.

Both peregrine falcons and bald eagles occur in the area as spring and/or fall migrants, and bald eagles may occur as winter residents. We are not aware of peregrine falcon nest territories in or near the project area, but an eagle nest occurs about 1.5 miles north of a point near the west end of the project, and other bald eagle nest territories exist in the general vicinity. While we do not foresee any substantive issues with the proposed project with regard to the bald eagle and peregrine falcon, any powerlines in the vicinity, if not properly constructed, could pose electrocution hazards for these species. To conserve these species and other large raptors protected by Federal law, we urge that any powerlines that may need to be modified or reconstructed as a result of the project be raptor-proofed following the criteria and techniques outlined in the Raptor Research Report No. 4, **"Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Powerlines - The State of the Art in 1981"**. A copy may be obtained from:

Jim Fitzpatrick, Treasurer
Raptor Research Foundation
Carpenter St. Croix Nature Center
12805 St. Croix Trail
Hastings, Minnesota 55033.

There appears to be a potential for the project to adversely impact wetland habitats. Accordingly, we assume that a wetland inventory and impact assessment has or will be completed in accordance with the 1989, "Interagency Memorandum of Understanding: Management and Mitigation of Highway Construction Impacts to Wetlands in the State of Montana". We urge completion of any needed wetland mitigation in full accordance with that Memorandum of Understanding.

It also appears that the project as proposed may impinge on a tract of land that is part of the National Bison Range, and that is reportedly used for fishing access to the Jocko River. In that case, a right-of-way permit would be needed from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Please contact the Manager, National Bison Range, Moiese, Montana 59824 (phone: 644-2211), if you haven't already done so.

We appreciate your efforts to consider and conserve fish and wildlife resources, including threatened and endangered species. If you have questions regarding this letter, please contact Mr. Gary Wood of our Billings Suboffice (406) 657-6750.

Sincerely,

John G. Wood

Kemper McMaster
Field Supervisor
For Montana/Wyoming Field Office

cc: Duane C. Lewis, Federal Highway Administration (Helena, MT)
Jeff Ryan, Montana Department of Highways (Helena, MT)
Jeff Herbert, Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (Helena, MT)
Ken Chrest, Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (Helena, MT)
Jack Thomas, Montana Dept. of Health, Water Quality Bureau (Helena, MT)
Steve Potts, Environmental Protection Agency (Helena, MT)
John Peters, Environmental Protection Agency (Denver, CO)
Suboffice Coordinator, USFWS, Fish & Wildlife Enhancement (Billings, MT)

JGW/dc

"Take Pride in America"

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1420 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, Montana 59620
March 15, 1991

Ms. Edrie L. Vinson, Supervisor
Environmental Section
Dept. of Highways
2701 Prospect Ave.
Helena, MT 59620

RE: F 6-1(24)109
Dixon-Ravalli

Dear Edrie:

Regional fishery personnel have reviewed the planning report for the subject project and their comments are as follows: The Jocko River is characterized by gravel and cobble substrate throughout the project area. Game fish species found within the Jocko include the following: rainbow trout, brown trout, westslope cutthroat, bull trout, brook trout, and mountain whitefish. This species list includes both spring and fall spawners. Potential impacts would be expected during bridge construction and timing and procedures should be outlined. Long and short-term storm runoff and erosion control must be addressed. Consideration should also be given for fisherman access adjacent to the bridge.

I would like to add that the Jocko River is located entirely on the Flathead Indian Reservation. Tribal biologists probably have more information on the river than us. According to the stream classification system, the tribe assigned this reach of the Jocko River a one rating (highest value fishery resource).

Sincerely,

Al Wipperman

Al Wipperman, Chief
Habitat Protection Bureau
Fisheries Division

Date Recd. Preconst 3/18/91

Act	Info	MAIL ROUTE	Attach	Initial
	✓	30 Preconst Engr		
	✓	30 Assistant		
		30 Office Mgr		
	✓	32 Road Design		
✓		33 Environment		
		34 Hydraulics		
		35 Survey & Mapping		
		36 Traffic		
		39 Consultant		
		File		

drg
C: Dan Vincent/~~Jim Vashro~~
Ken Chrest

**Montana Department
of
Fish, Wildlife & Parks**

1420 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, Montana 59620

September 30, 1991

Mr. David S. Johnson, Chief
Preconstruction Bureau
Dept. of Highways
2701 Prospect
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Mr. Johnson:

RE: F 6-1(24)109
Dixon - Ravalli C#579

We have reviewed your above-mentioned proposed project for building a two-lane roadway with a new bridge spanning the Jocko River and BNRR just west of Ravalli.

The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks knows of no 6(f) or 4(f) Conversion of Use which would occur as a result of the proposed roadway and bridge project.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We appreciate your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen McDonald
MARY ELLEN MC DONALD
Administrative Officer
Operations Bureau
Parks Division

ks

Date Recd. Precons 10 2 91

Act	Info	MAIL ROUTE	Attach	Initial
	✓	30 Preconst Engr		
	✓	30 Assistant		
		30 Office Mgr		
		31 Safety Mgmt.		
	✓	32 Road Design		
	✓	33 Environment		
	✓	34 Hydraulics		
		35 Survey & Mapping		
		36 Traffic Eng.		
		37 Traffic Operations		
		39 Consultant Dsn.		
	✓	Weaver		
	✓	File		

Montana Department
of
Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1420 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, Montana 59620

September 30, 1991

Mr. David S. Johnson, Chief
Preconstruction Bureau
Dept. of Highways
2701 Prospect
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Mr. Johnson:

RE: F 6-1(24)109
Dixon - Ravalli C#579

We have reviewed your above-mentioned proposed project for building a two-lane roadway with a new bridge spanning the Jocko River and BNRR just west of Ravalli.

The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks knows of no 6(f) or 4(f) Conversion of Use which would occur as a result of the proposed roadway and bridge project.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We appreciate your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen McDonald
MARY ELLEN MC DONALD
Administrative Officer
Operations Bureau
Parks Division

ks

Date Recd. Preconst 10/2/91

Act	Info	MAIL ROUTE	Attach	Initial
	✓	30 Preconst Engr		
	✓	30 Assistant		
		30 Office Mgr		
		31 Safety Mgmt		
	✓	32 Road Design		
	✓	33 Environment		
	✓	34 Hydraulics		
		35 Survey & Mapping		
		36 Traffic Eng.		
		37 Traffic Operations		
		39 Consultant Dsn.		
	✓	Weaver		
	✓	File		

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS

STAN STEPHENS, GOVERNOR

STATE OF MONTANA

2701 PROSPECT AVE.

HELENA, MONTANA 59620

MASTER
FILE
COPY

January 22, 1992

Dale Harms, Montana State F&WE State Supervisor
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Federal Building, 301 South Park
P.O. Box 10023
Helena, MT 59626

Subject: F 6-1(24)109 C# 0579
Dixon - Ravalli Road
Biological Evaluation

Enclosed is a biological evaluation on wildlife and fisheries, including threatened and endangered species, for this proposed highway reconstruction project.

This project is located in northwestern Montana in Sanders and Lake Counties between the communities of Dixon and Ravalli. This section of highway is a part of Montana Highway 200. The project begins at the west edge of Dixon and extends easterly through the Flathead Indian Reservation for approximately 7.3 miles and ends at Ravalli. The enclosed maps show the location of the project. Your initial response to this project, dated March 8, 1991, indicated the bald eagle and peregrine falcon may appear in the project area. Sightings of wolves and possibly grizzly bear have been reported in the vicinity of the project according to various sources.

Findings based on the biological evaluation tend to thus far indicate a not likely to adversely affect for the bald eagle and peregrine falcon. We request your review of our findings and a written response of concurrence if appropriate.

Thank you for your review and consideration.

Edrie Vinson

Edrie L. Vinson, Chief
Environmental & Hazardous Waste Bureau

ELV:D:ENV:63.dlw
Enclosures
cc: Gordon L. Larson, P.E., Asst. Administrator
Engineering
~~Environmental~~ Bureau File

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

MASTER

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1420 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, MT 59620
February 28, 1992

Edrie L. Vinson, Chief
Environmental and Hazardous Waste Bureau
Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
Helena, MT 59620

F 6-1(24)109
RS 551-1(1)0

Dear Edrie:

We have reviewed the Dixon-Ravalli wetland assessment. The assessments look complete. We also acknowledge the change in the Geyser-North project in terms of the mitigation package. The .53 acre take can be mitigated through the contractor incentive program.

I had the chance to inspect the Big Sandy mitigation site this week. The site looks very good and can serve as an excellent example of how the contractor incentive program can work. For a relatively small area the site offers a wide diversity of vegetation types and interspersed wetland areas. I think you should consider some type of sign on site to provide some positive PR benefits for the program.

Sincerely

Jeff Herbert
Statewide Waterfowl Coordinator

RECEIVED
MAR 04 1992
ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU

U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Highway
Administration**

301 S. Park
Drawer 10056
Helena, Montana 59626-0056

MONTANA DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION
RECEIVED
MAR 13 1992
HELENA, MONTANA

MASTER
FILE
COPY

400 Seventh
Washington,

March 12, 1992

Mr. John Rothwell
Director
Montana Department of Transportation
Helena, Montana

Dear Mr. Rothwell:

Subject: F 6-1(24)109
Dixon - Ravalli

The Department plans to remove the railroad grade separation structure that has been in place since 1934 and replace it with a new bridge over the Jocko River and an at grade crossing of the railroad. At the time the decision was made to put in an at grade crossing, it appeared that this railroad line might be abandoned in the near future. Instead of abandoning the line, MRL has spent money to upgrade the track and increase train traffic. MRL presently averages seven trains per day on this line. In addition, Burlington Northern Inc. retained the right to use the line whenever the high line is shut down because of a derailment or scheduled maintenance of major structures. Burlington Northern, Inc. averages 28 trains per day on the high line.

We believe removal of the grade separation structure and replacing it with an at-grade crossing is short sighted, and that several things were not considered in the decision. Here are some of the reasons to reconsider putting in a grade separation structure rather than an at-grade crossing:

1. The economic analysis to support an at-grade crossing lacks credibility. We raised questions about several things by memorandums in 1989 and 1990, without receiving a satisfactory explanation. For example, three railroad grade separations were constructed on FAP 39 (the Colstrip Road) in 1983. There are nine trains per day and less ADT on FAP 39 than FAP 6. In addition, traffic volumes on FAP 6 are growing at a faster rate.

2. The combined location and design public hearing held on December 7, 1977 led people to believe that a new structure would be built to span the Jocko River and the Burlington Northern Railroad. The preliminary plan-in-hand report dated July 16, 1986 mentioned the vertical clearance over the railroad and then requested the R/W Bureau to contact the BNRR to obtain their reaction to an at-grade crossing.

3. If an at-grade crossing is installed it will be very difficult to construct a smooth crossing. The new highway is on a 2 percent down grade on both sides of the railroad tracks with a short +0.4 percent grade near the tracks. The tracks are at a high skew angle to the highway with a spiral to tangent starting at the tracks.

4. The down grades will increase the stopping distance and will likely increase winter accidents because vehicles will have to apply brakes while on the Jocko River structure. School buses and hazardous materials carriers have mandatory stops at all rural crossings. This increases the risk of a rear end collision.

5. The eastbound (short side) distance from the railroad tracks to the Jocko River Bridge is only 135 feet. With the minimum clearance from the railroad tracks, this will not allow enough approach guardrail to meet the length of need to keep errant vehicles out of the Jocko River.

6. The confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes are upset that an at-grade crossing will be installed instead of a grade separation structure. This adds an element of risk where none was present before. In addition, the exposure rate (number of trips across the tracks) is higher for local people than for the general population.

7. Collisions between large trucks and trains often result in a derailment. If either a truck or train were carrying hazardous materials, and were involved in a collision, contamination of the Jocko River would likely result. We are sure that the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe would not want this risk. In addition, the proposal for an at-grade crossing along with the risks involved were not discussed in the environmental document for this project.

8. An at-grade crossing is a significant change over what was presented at the public hearing and in the environmental document. The environmental document will have to be updated to address these issues and the public informed by another public hearing.

Since this route is on the STP, it is your call to put in an at-grade crossing if you desire. However, we believe you need to get the tribe's blessing, as well as the local residents.

Sincerely,

Hank Honeywell

Hank D. Honeywell
Division Administrator

c: Kathleen Fleury, State Coordinator of Indian Affairs

DLF/ab

FLATHEAD RESOURCE ORGANIZATION
BOX 541
ST. IGNATIUS, MONTANA 59865

Act
Info
Precon
Office
32 Ro
33 En
34 H
35 Su
36 Traffic
39 Consultant
Weaver
File

May 30, 1991

David S. Johnson
Preconstruction Engineer
2701 Prospect Ave
Helena, MT 59620
Subject: Dixon-Ravalli Highway Project

Mr. Johnson:

As you may know from your review of comments on Highway 93-Highway 200 construction projects, the Flathead Resource Organization (FRO) proposed Environmental Impact Statements on both projects.

We sincerely appreciate the Department's decision to develop an EIS for Highway 93 from Evaro Hill to Polson, but we believe that many of the gains that can be anticipated from the information gathered from that study will be lost if it is not applied to the proposed Ravalli-to-Dixon-to-Paradise Highway 200 project.

We were told by your department earlier this year that contracts for construction of the Ravalli-to-Dixon section would be advertised in September, 1992. We now understand from your letter of April 26 that the ready day has been moved up to May, 1992.

We feel that premature environmental engineering of the Highway 200 project would not only be inadequate for the seven miles in question, but might negate the enlightened gains made possible by the Highway 93 EIS. We again urge you to reconsider inclusion of Highway 200 in the overall Highway 93 project, and delay the ready date until that study is completed.

Here are our reasons:

☐ The Environmental Review of the Highway 200 project was completed in 1977. A quick reading of the five pages of text would indicate that the review is totally inadequate in its environmental inventory, and totally fails to anticipate environmental impacts. We also believe that since it does not address the current siting considerations for the project, it cannot be considered an adequate decision-making tool for approval of the project.

☐ Several FRO members live along the project area, and have documented several important wildlife migration areas across the highway. These include...

1. the logging access road on the west footing of the Ravalli railroad overpass bridge.
2. logging road east of the George and Barbara Price residence. Elk, black bear (and possibly grizzly), deer and beaver are known to use this corridor. In addition, the Prices have observed juvenile bald eagles in fledging flights with breeding adults at this location.
3. wooded area between Coles and Sullivans. Both elk and deer commonly use this crossing.
4. Bison Range Fishing access. Deer, elk and black bear have been observed using this crossing.

5. West of the Big Crane residence. This may be a major crossing for the Valley Creek elk herd, as it links Trisky Creek in the Bison Range with the heavily-wooded slopes of the Valley Creek Divide.
6. Selow Creek crossing east of Burtch's. Possibly a major artery of migration for all animals in the Mission Mountain, Jocko-Pistol Creek and the Flathead River.
7. Gulch east of Highway 212. This route is used by all game animals and was used by wolves (an endangered species) during the winter of 1991.

☐ The wetlands from Selow Creek crossing east for one mile on the south side of the current roadbed was not addressed in the ER and is significantly used by waterfowl, shorebird, riparian furbearer (mink, otter, beaver, and muskrat). It is also important as a filtering area for water fed into the Jocko River.

☐ The grading and treatment of the slope into the Jocko River at the two points where it is adjacent to the roadbed (just west and just east of Burtch's) should be carefully studied and be subjected to peer and public review before approved.

☐ The bridge crossing at Ravalli could also have significant impacts on the river and should be subjected to widest possible peer and public review.

☐ We believe that the current plans for removing the railroad overpass and substituting it with a level track crossing is counterproductive, because it not only creates a regular bottleneck for traffic, but also establishes a hazard where none existed before.

☐ We feel that the increase in traffic speed through the town of Dixon will also constitute a hazard for school and business crossings, and this should be carefully studied before the project is approved.

☐ We understand that the total right-of-way for the project will be about 160 feet, which is much more than is necessary for the 40-foot roadbed proposed in the ER and removes far too much land from agricultural use in the valley.

☐ We believe that the expanded roadbed should not be considered without an adequate eight- to ten-foot wide bicycle path.

☐ The ER did not consider possible alternatives to the project, such as routing truck traffic away from Highway 200 or using the current railroad tracks which follow 200 throughout the extended project area for both commercial and public transportation. Both of these alternatives would eliminate the need for the construction project.

We appreciate your review of our comments and concerns, and urge you to reply in detail as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Gary LeDeau

Gary LeDeau
Chairman

cc.Micky Pablo, CS&KT
Dan Decker, Legal Dir. CS&KT
Lloyd Jackson, CS&KT Shoreline
Congressman Pat Williams
Gov. Stan Stevens
Sanders County Commission

FLATHEAD RESOURCE ORGANIZATION
BOX 541
ST. IGNATIUS, MONTANA 59865

Gov. Stephens,
this letter to Mr Larson
should provide some
background
RFE

November 15, 1991

Gordon Larson
Administrator of Engineering
Montana Department of Transportation

Mr. Larson:

The Flathead Resource Organization, which represents some 80 residents of the lower Flathead River Valley, and members of the lower Jocko River community between Ravalli and Dixon have met with engineers from the Missoula Division of the Department of Highways twice over the past three months.

On both occasions, the residents of the area to be affected by the reconstruction of Highway have been unanimously critical of the department's plans which are to be initiated in the fall of 1992. Despite the criticism, department officials have refused to either change the engineering plans for the Ravalli-Dixon project or to agree to a comprehensive Ravalli to Paradise engineering or environmental study.

FRO and the community feel that the current plans are flawed in several ways, including:

1. The department's plans to remove the existing railroad overpass and replace it with a level crossing with a signal. Residents unanimously believe this would constitute a greater danger than exists now, and would actually slow the flow of traffic. These factors would negate the safety and efficiency justifications for the reconstruction project.

2. The direct and cumulative impacts on valuable wildlife habitat and migration corridors which the project would entail on both the current section and the projected leg west of Dixon.

3. That the department is ignoring the possibility of relieving the roadbed of heavy shipping by encouraging its diversion to the existing railroad system that runs parallel to the highway.

4. That the safety of children in the towns of Ravalli, Dixon, and subsequently Perma and Plains is not being considered in the plans. In fact, no speed limits in any communities appears to be considered by the department.

5. That the possibility of long range, irreparable damage to the Jocko river, a valuable trout fishery, is not being adequately considered in the department's plans for the new level-crossing bridge and bank stabilization at Gabe Hill east of Dixon.

FRO believes that if these factors are not rationally addressed by the department before construction on the Dixon-Ravalli leg is begun, they have the potential of devastating long range impacts on the community and users of the

road. Future development between Perma and Plains would be tainted by a commitment to a poor and unworkable design. We further believe that the only way to address these problems and avoid future impacts on subsequent legs of Highway 200 is to pre-plan the engineering on the entire Ravalli-Plains project and to subject the plans to the EIS process.

The department is currently developing an EIX on the Evaro Hill-Polson legs of Highway 93. Because the geography and communities of the two highways are intimately related (both would have impacts on the Flathead and Jocko Rivers), it would seem simple at this time to devise an area-wide highway and transportation plan and EIS.

We strongly believe that the best interest of both the community and highway users would be served by this kind of detailed overview.

Please let us know as soon as possible your thoughts on this project.

Thank you,

Doug Baty
Chairperson

RECEIVED
FEB 18 1992
ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU

FLATHEAD RESOURCE ORGANIZATION
BOX 541
ST. IGNATIUS, MONTANA 59865

MASTER FILE COPY
Received:
ACT INFO
Adm. Operations
Preconstruction
Construction
Bridge
Right-of-Way
Jim Weaver
to Edrie

Feb. 10, 1992

Edrie Vinson
Environmental Bureau
Department of Highways
Helena, MT 59620

F 6-1(24)169

Ms. Vinson:

Thank you for your responses to our inquiries in November, 1991. we apologize for taking so long in preparing the wildlife siting-corridor map you requested earlier.

For convenience, we will respond in this letter to statements made by both you and Mr. Larson in recent letters regarding the potential jeopardy to wildlife and fisheries posed by current reconstruction plans for Highway 200.

On the subject of large game animal use of the lower Jocko Valley, we believe that the valley is an important crossroads for resident and migrating animals from other areas. Mr. Larson contends that any migration routes that did exist were blocked by the National Bison Range fence. On the contrary, there is a constantly-used corridor across Highway 200 on the west lip of Gabe Hill that cuts along the Agency golf course outside the Bison Range fence and proceeds north along the fence adjacent to Highway 212.

Also, as any resident of the valley can tell you, there is a constant ebb and flow of animals from the Valley Creek side (south) to the Bison Range fence. Rather than a barrier, the Bison Range may be an attraction to the lower Jocko and valley Creek populations. We know that there are low spots in the fence where elk and deer jump, and we can assume there is a valuable genetic recruitment aspect to the exchange.

During the winter, elk are especially likely to cross the highway to drink from the Jocko. During cold spells, the J-Canal is either dry or frozen, and there are no springs on the Valley Creek divide.

Another problem you apparently have not considered in addressing roadside cover is the fact that elk and deer are hunted year-round on the reservation by tribal members. Animals which must cross the highway will be considerably more vulnerable if these cover areas are set back.

We also believe that the set-back will not relieve the roadkill problem you noted (we also contend that your estimation of 10 deer per year is probably somewhat exaggerated). The increase in traffic volume and speed would more than offset any advantages of clearing the roadside.

Within the immediate and not-too distant past, the area between Ravalli and Perma has been important for several species listed as threatened or endangered. You know about the eagle nest on the Island just upstream from the Dixon Agency, but there is at least one, and probably two on islands near Perma, and another one in the hills South of Perma. Local ranchers claim that wolves have been fairly common in the area between Ravalli and Magpie Creek; in addition to the four immature wolves in the area in 1991 (one of which was seen as late as June, 1991 in Dixon), wolves have been seen in Selow Creek and west of Revais Creek. Although we do not contend that the lower Jocko Valley is critical to grizzly habitat, there has been some historical use of the area. For instance, a local rancher ran into a grizzly during late 1971 near Battle Mountain, south of Dixon. Grizzly scat has been found near Magpie Creek (Border Grizzly Project), and ranchers also report sightings of grizzlies between Revais and Magpie Creeks.

One of the few advantages of the Highway 200 project is the prospect of eliminating the erosion of the roadbed at Gabe Hill. However, we question the long term effectiveness of the proposed combination of moving the bed south and cutting down the slope. The slope from the river to the road bed is very steep, at some places, close to 90 degrees, and composed of highly erosive clay and glacial till. The hydrology of the Jocko at that point is constantly pushing against the south bank, so that it is unlikely that seeding or bars would be of much use.

Of even more concern are your plans for a new bridge at Ravalli. A new, level-crossing bridge not only renders the road slower and more dangerous (railroad crossing) than the existing situation, it will have both short and long term impacts on the river. Erosion and sedimentation from earlier channelization projects are considered by Tribal Fisheries as the greatest impediment to trout fisheries on the river. The crossing and the necessary channel work would add permanent instability to the river bed, exacerbating the current problem.

You mention that drainage fields would protect the Jocko from pollutants, but the current plan calls for a storm drain in Dixon which pours into a pot hole in the bank of the Flathead. That pot hole floods over every spring, and that flooding would carry pollutants directly into the river.

You maintain that 21 acres of wetland and riparian habitat out of a total of 1,040 acres would be destroyed. This is a 3.2 percent loss which, in itself, is significant. Further, when it is added to the indirect impacts, particularly on the riparian areas which rely on a stable streambed, the total impact could be far larger.

To conclude, we believe that our concerns on these matters are based on equally valid biological assumptions as those of your department. We believe that the only way to resolve our differences is to conduct further on-site studies of wildlife

and fisheries in the area. These studies would be most effective if conducted in the form of an Environmental Impact statement. Further, an EIS would resolve some of the questions concerning the engineering rational of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact me. My telephone number is 246-3222.

Thank You,

Richard Eggert
FRO Board member
Star Route
Dixon, MT. 59831

FLATHEAD RESOURCE ORGANIZATION
BOX 541
ST. IGNATIUS, MONTANA 59865

Gov. Stan Stephens
Executive Office
Room 204, State Capitol
Helena, Mt 59620

Feb. 13, 1992

Gov. Stephens:

Enclosed are copies of a petition requesting you to intervene in behalf of the people who use and live along Highway 200 in Lake and Sanders County.

The reason we are sending you the petitions rather than addressing them to the MTOT or Highway officials is because we have repeatedly tried those channels, and have received little if any satisfaction.

In two face-to-face meetings with highway officials, we have been told that the department will not alter its plans to accommodate local concerns about traffic safety (such as the on-grade railroad crossing) and the environmental integrity of the Lower Jocko-Flathead River drainages. Numerous letters to highway and MDOT officials have proven futile.

You, Gov. Stephens, are our last resort. We know you came from a rural community and probably had the same feelings of impotence when "trying to fight city hall". Please do what you can to assure that the welfare and safety of your constituents is not being trampled by a bureaucracy which evidently believes that pavement is more important than people.

If we can be of any further assistance, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Richard Eggert
Vice Chair: Flathead Resource Organization
Star Route
Dixon, MT 59830

Telephone: 246-3222

State of Montana
Office of the Governor
Helena, Montana 59620
406-444-3111

STAN STEPHENS
GOVERNOR

49

February 21, 1992

F 6-1(24)109
Dixon Ravalli
#0579

Richard Eggert, Vice Chair
Flathead Resource Organization
Star Route
Dixon, Montana 59830

Dear Richard:

Thank you for your letter and petition regarding concerns you have about Highway 200.

I am always concerned when individual citizens express frustration with their ability to communicate clearly and effectively with any state department. This is particularly true when it comes to something as important as our roads.

Therefore, I am asking the Director of the Department of Transportation John Rothwell to personally look at the concerns you have raised. You can expect prompt and insightful service from Mr. Rothwell. Being from the private sector he knows the importance of serving clients and recognizes that the people of Montana are the department's clients. You can anticipate hearing from Mr. Rothwell in the near future.

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Stan Stephens

STAN STEPHENS
Governor

✓cc: John Rothwell

Montana Department
of Transportation

2701 Prospect Avenue
Helena, MT 59620-9726

Stan Stephens, Governor

March 13, 1992

Richard Eggert
Flathead Resource Organization
Star Route
Dixon, MT 59830

Subject: F 6-1(24)109
Dixon - Ravalli
Control No. 0579

I am sorry to learn that you feel you have been unsuccessful in getting the department's ear. Actually you have, but I must admit there is room for improvement. I met with Jim Weaver, our Missoula District Engineer, and Edrie Vinson, Chief of our Environmental Bureau, and learned that they are doing a reevaluated environmental analysis in this project. They are also considering the merits and the environmental consequences of both the overpass and the at-grade railroad crossing.

In order to make sure your concerns are fully addressed, I have asked them to meet with you and your organization. Mr. Weaver will be getting in touch with you to set up an appointment.

John Rothwell
Director of Transportation

JR:ELV:D:ENV:185.dlw

cc: Governor Stan Stephens
Commissioner Roy Duff
Thomas J. Barnard, P.E.
Administrator, Highways Division

An Equal Opportunity Employer

APPENDIX D

DISTRIBUTION LIST ☞

EA DISTRIBUTION LIST

Date: March 15, 1994

Project: DIXON - RAVALLI
F-STPP 6-1(24)109

A copy of the EA was sent to the following:

Environmental Quality Council
Office of the Director
Capitol Post Office
P.O. Box 215
Helena, MT 59620 (DEADHEAD)

State Clearinghouse
Lieutenant Governor's Office
Capitol Building
Helena, MT 59620 (DEADHEAD)

Harold L. Chambers (12 copies)
State Library
1515 East 6th Avenue
Helena, MT 59620-1800

U.S. Fish & Wildlife
Montana Office
Enhancement Division
Mr. Kemper McMaster, Field Supvr.
Federal Building, 301 South Park
Helena, MT 59626

Michael Pablo, Chairman
Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes
of the Flathead Reservation
PO Box 278
Pablo MT 59855

Rhonda Swaney
Natural Resources Department
Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes
of the Flathead Reservation
PO Box 278
Pablo MT 59855

A notice of the availability of the EA was sent to the following:

U. S. Postmaster
U. S. Post Office
Dixon, MT 59831

U. S. Postmaster
U. S. Post Office
Ravalli, MT 59863

Sanders County Commissioners
Sanders County Courthouse
Thompson Falls, MT 59873

State Soil Conservation Service
10 East Babcock Street, Room 443
Federal Building
Bozeman, MT 59715

E.P.A. Region 8
Environmental Review Coordinator
One Denver Place
949 - 18th Street
Denver, CO 80202-2405

U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey
Water Resources Division
Room 428, Federal Building
301 South Park, Drawer 10076
Helena, MT 59626

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (ES)
1501 - 14th Street West
Suite 230
Billings, MT 59102

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Portland Area Director
P.O. Box 3785
Portland, OR 97208

Director, Federal Agency
Liaison Division
Office of Federal Activities
EPA Environmental Review
Coordinator
Washington, DC 20460

American Wilderness Alliance
C.R. Merritt, Executive Director
746 Sawyer Lane
Hamilton, MT 59840

Montana Automobile Association
P.O. Box 4129
Helena, MT 59604

Montana Motor Carriers Association
P.O. Box 1714
Helena, MT 59624

Sierra Club
Bitterroot Mission Group
P.O. Box 7315
Missoula, MT 59801

Montana Wildlife Federation
P.O. Box 6537
Bozeman, MT 59715

The Nature Conservancy
32 South Ewing St.
Helena, MT 59601

Montana Audubon Council
P.O. Box 595
Helena, MT 59624

Department of Fish,
Wildlife & Parks
Stream Protection Coordinator
1420 East 6th Avenue
Helena, MT 59620

Department of Health &
  Environmental Sciences
Solid & Hazardous Waste Bureau
836 Front Street
Helena, MT 59620

Department of Health
   & Environmental Sciences
Air Quality Bureau
Cogswell Building
Helena, MT 59620

Department of Health
   & Environmental Sciences
Water Quality Bureau
Cogswell Building
Helena, MT 59620

Department of Natural Resources
   & Conservation
Office of the Director
1520 East 6th
Helena, MT 59620